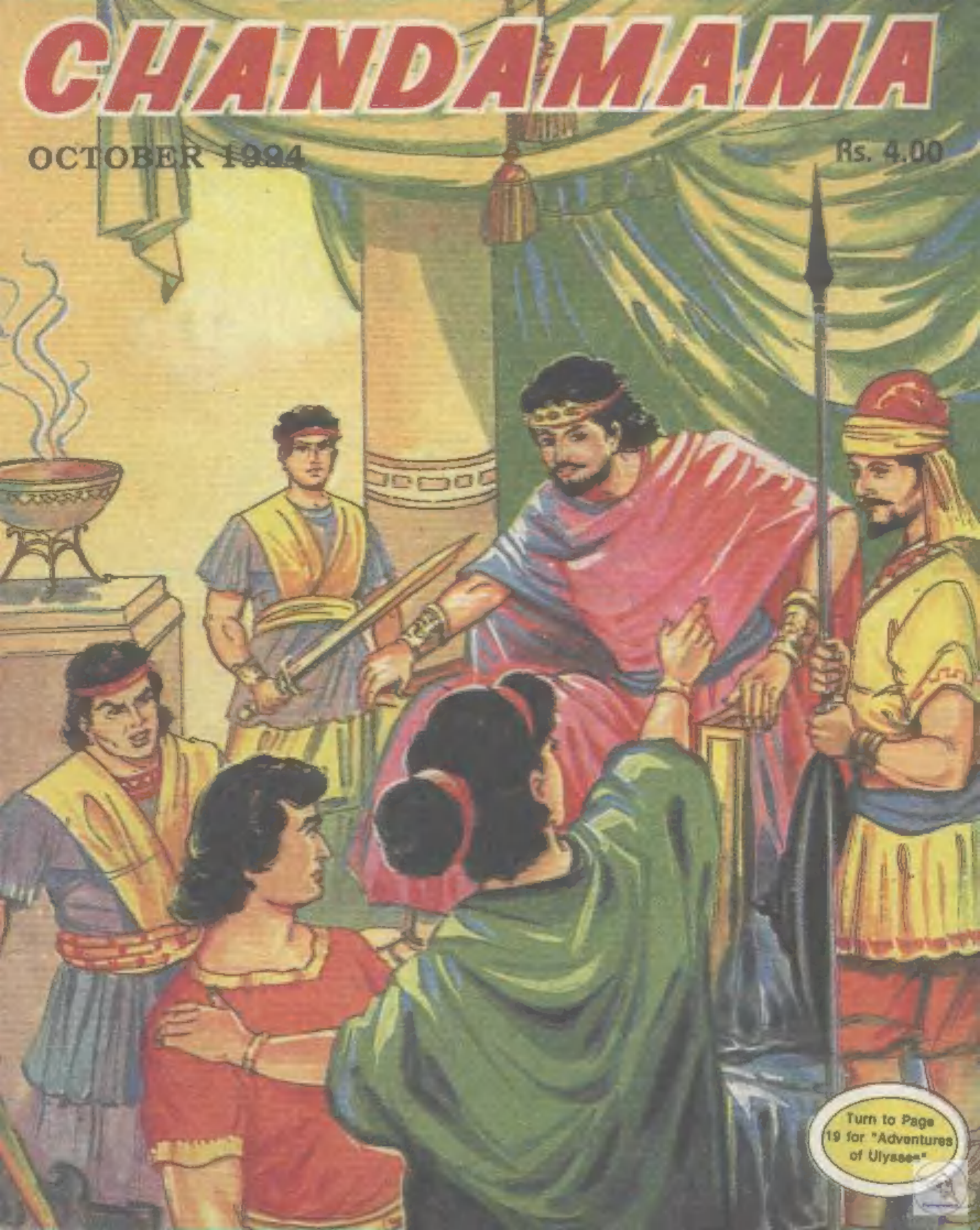


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come home from school !



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NEXT ISSUE

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THE MAHABHARATA : King Parikshit dies of snake-bite, despite the precautions taken by him to prevent the serpent Takshaka from entering his fortress-like tower. His son Janamejaya finds out how his father had met with his end. He is advised to hold a serpent sacrifice to wipe out Takshaka and his family. Janamejaya is warned that he will not be able to complete the yaga, as brahmin will prevent it. Serpents from all nooks and corners reach the yaga place and end their life in the sacrificial fire. Takshaka goes to Lord Indra for protection. At the instance of Vasuki, a leader among serpents, his nephew Asthik goes to the sacrifice. He pleases Janamejaya and elicits a boon from him. He wants the sacrifice to be stopped! No, he will not spell out any other wish. Janamejaya keeps his promise. The sacrifice is stopped. Sage Vedavyas arrives there and tells them the story of the forefathers of Janamejaya and Parikshit.

A JOURNEY WITH A DIFFERENCE: 'Merry' or Dr. Mahindra invites his friend to his laboratory. "Drop in double-quick; there's something happening here!" The friend rushes to find two bottles with red and blue powders. A 'Time Machine' is in action and the two go on an exciting journey.

PLUS all the "regulars", including Adventures of Ulysses, Panchatantra in comics, and and

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Controlling Editor :
NAGI REDDI



Founder :
CHAKRAPANI

IDEAL REFORMS

Of late, reports have been frequently appearing in newspapers of a likely overhaul of the education system and pattern of teaching. At the instance of the government, schools have decided to do away with the system of "interviewing" tiny-tots up to a certain age before they are given admission. The use of text-books and notebooks in pre-primary classes will soon be a thing of the past. The number of text-books prescribed year after year for higher classes—to be carried by children to school every day—is expected to be reduced and kept to the minimum. The burden of the obnoxious system of homework is also to be lessened to give children more time to spare for general reading, so as to inculcate in them the reading habit. Each of these reforms sounds ideal, and raises a cheer in children and great relief for parents. How soon they will be put to practice is something keenly awaited.

Among many experiments and innovations thought up by schools are the ones implemented by an educational institution "somewhere in the north". It started functioning only when the buildings came up for all ten standards. It was decided that each class would have only one division, which would have a specified number of students and not one extra. Next, the school made adequate transport arrangements to pick up every student from his or her home. After a continuous session in the morning, the students were given a long break when they ate lunch provided by the school in its well-appointed mess. That meant, no lunch boxes from home. The children relaxed for a while and then went back to their classrooms, to face a fresh set of teachers, who would only supervise their 'homework' which was never taken to their homes. The school contented that the parents were not competent enough or qualified to guide the children in the way they are taught in the school. Homework at school over, the children were taken back home—and here comes the surprise—without their text-books and notebooks. They were retained in the school.

Would you call this something worth emulating?



A Vote for change in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka now has a woman Prime Minister, who happens to be the daughter of two earlier Prime Ministers. She is Mrs. Chandrika Kumaratunga.

Following the assassination of Mr. S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike in 1959, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike became Prime Minister in 1960—the first woman to hold such a post anywhere in the world. She ruled till 1965, and for a second term from 1970 to 1977. In the 1978 elections, her Sri Lanka Freedom Party was defeated by the United National Party led by Mr. J.R. Jayawardene.

The U.N.P. ruled the country uninterruptedly for 17 years, but was defeated at the general elections held on August 16. The opposition People's Alliance, composed of the S.L.F.P. and others, led by Mrs. Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga, secured the largest number of seats in the 225 member legislature; the U.N.P. got 10 seats less than what the Alliance had managed to get, which however fell short of a simple majority to form a government on its own. Some of the minority parties extended their support and, on their assurance, the People's Alliance chose Mrs. Kumaratunga to head the government. She was sworn in as Prime Minister on August 19, along with 21 others to form the cabinet. And one of them is her mother, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, herself.

Shaped like a "tear-drop", Sri Lanka in the Indian Ocean, lying south of the Indian peninsula, is the same Lanka familiar to all those who have read the *Ramayana*. It was ruled by the demon king, Ravana, who abducted Sita and was killed by Rama while rescuing his wife. Students of history will recall that Emperor Asoka, after embracing Buddhism, sent his daughter to Lanka to spread Buddhism. The Buddhist shrine in Anuradhapura is famous for the Buddhist relic—the Buddha's tooth—it has preserved for more than 2,000 years, and the Asoka tree which has grown from the sapling the Magadha princess had taken with her



K. K. K.



and planted there.

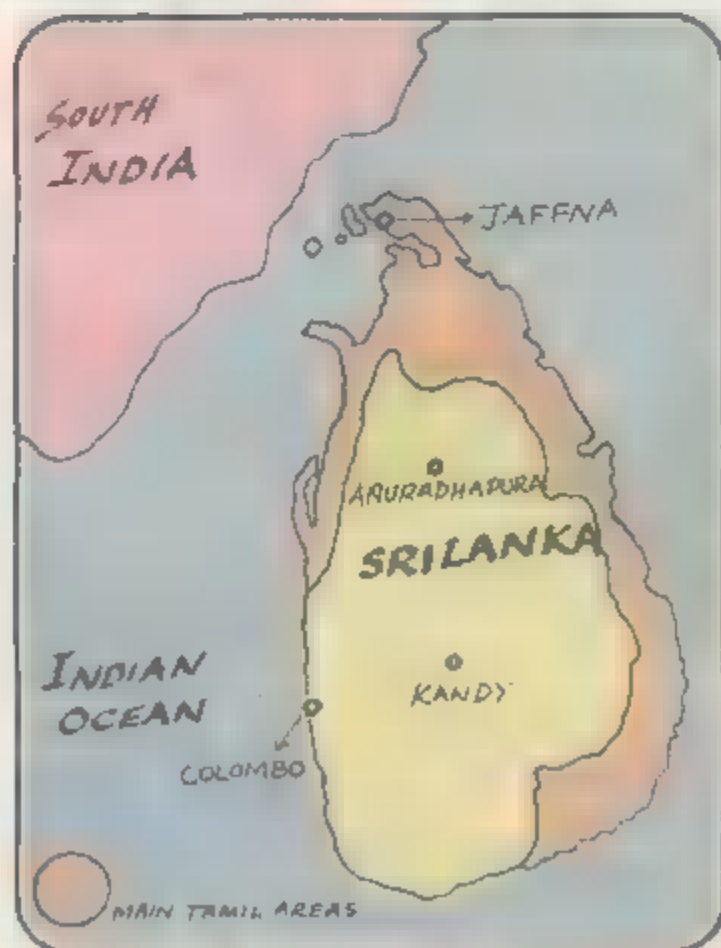
Lanka's recent history tells us that it was occupied by the Portuguese in the early years of the 16th century. By the middle of the 17th century, the Dutch had established their supremacy. The turn of the 18th century saw Britain seizing power. After ■ colonial rule for 450 years the island, then known ■ Ceylon (derived from *Simhala*), became ■ independent state within the British Commonwealth in 1948. In 1972, it proclaimed itself ■ ■ Socialist Republic. It also dropped the name Ceylon and took its ancient title Lanka, prefixing it with 'Sri', meaning "resplendant nation". Following the success of the United National Party in the 1977 elections, its leader, Mr. Jayawardene, became President under a new Presidential constitution, whereby the President can keep certain portfolios with him, leaving the others to the cabinet.

In the 1989 elections, the U.N.P. was re-elected but with a reduced majority. Mr. Premadasa, who was Prime Minister till then, was chosen President. While leading a May Day rally in 1993, he became the victim of ■ assassin. Prime Minister D.B. Wijetunge then became President. His term ends in January 1995. The Presidential election is to be held in November.

The majority people in Sri Lanka are Sinhalese, who are traditionally Buddhists. The northern and eastern parts are peopled by Tamils, who form one-fifth of the population. The Tamils had gone from India either as settlers or ■ labourers. The presence of two ethnically different groups has caused periodic violence from 1956. This led to ■ virtual civil war in 1983 in which nearly 20,000

people have so far lost their lives. In 1987, on an appeal from Sri Lanka, India sent some 60,000 soldiers to put an end to violence.

Chandrika Bandaranaike, who had most of her education in France, married ■ movie star, Vijaya Kumaratunga, who ■ keen to take to politics. He strove for ■ solution to the ethnic problem and ■ in constant touch with the Tamil leaders in Sri Lanka. He became close to Chief Minister M.G. Ramachandran of Tamil Nadu. Mr. Kumaratunga was assassinated in 1989. Mrs. Kumaratunga then joined the Sri Lanka Freedom Party in 1990, and after the provincial elections held in 1993, she became Chief Minister of the Western Province. That was the beginning of her political career.



NEWS FLASH

Crocs as Teachers

How do you study Nature? Nothing like going out into the open, feeling and smelling the flowers, looking in wonderment at the tall trees, watching the animals, birds, and butterflies in action and at rest, and spending time near the sea or a river, or even climbing hills and mountains. A lot of



questions rise in your mind, and whoever accompanies you tries to give you the answers. They can be your teachers. There is a school in Samittichote in Thailand where, in a pit, crocodiles are reared. The school has over 1,000 students, and the parents of some of them feared that the reptiles pose a hazard to the children. So, the authorities asked the Director of the school to remove the crocodiles and, when he refused, they threatened that they would order the school to be closed down. The Director pleaded with them: the reptiles are only 'teachers' helping the children learn some aspects of nature! And he had a point there, didn't he?

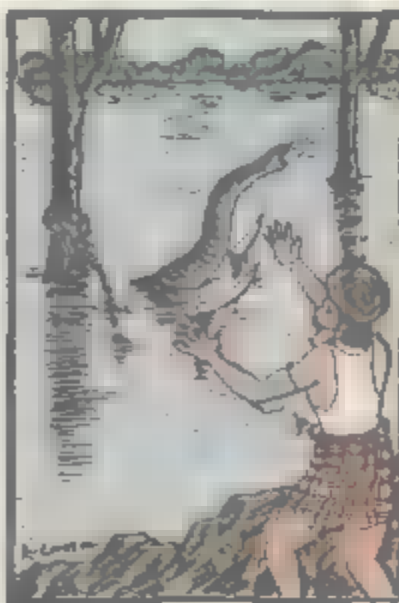
Strange Pets

Dogs as pets is very common, so also birds, especially parrots. A lady in The Hague, capital of the Nether-

lands, however, takes the cake. She has two dogs, a parrot, a mynah, three parakeets, a scorpion, and three iguanas. No, the list is not complete! She keeps two rattle snakes, two pythons, two boa constrictors, and ten other snakes, of course all in cages, but in her house. Can you beat that? As these pets are not prohibited by law in The Netherlands, she and her pets are safe from any legal action. The saddest part of it is, her husband and their two daughters, aged 2 and 7, have decided to live elsewhere. They assured her that they would go back to her when she gave up her little 'zoo'. Friends are now trying to persuade her to do that.

Waiting for His Master

For twenty days, a tusker was engaged in moving logs at a place called Mylam-mood in south Kerala. At night, the elephant used to be chained to the trees where nearby flows a river. On August 1, the ma-



hout as usual tied him to a tree and called it a day, and did not know that flood waters had entered the river and it was in spate. The water began rising and the trained el-

ephant did not trumpet, but waited for his master himself to come and free him. By morning, the elephant was

almost drowning, but managed to hold his trunk above the water. Before the mahout arrived on the scene, someone noticed the elephant's plight and dived into the water and managed to free his legs. Still, the elephant did not move away to a safer place, but waited for his master. The mahout, on hearing the news, rushed to the spot, waded to where the elephant was standing, and fondly stroked his trunk. Only then did the animal move – behind his master, now swimming to safety.

Trickle Saves a Life

In the case of Zeng Shuhua, ■■■ a trickle of water that kept him alive for nearly 40 days. The 20-year-old youth and 15 others were engaged in road work near the Wujiang river in Sichuan Province of China, when they were caught in a landslip on April 30. Four

persons died on the spot, and the others were declared missing. Zeng Shuhua managed to drag himself to ■ place looking like ■ cave. However, he was unable to



come out, as the only opening was blocked by debris. The ■■■ relieving factor was the trickle of water that he found inside the cave. He was rescued 40 days later. He survived ■■ that trickle of water.

Record Run

He ran alone from the southernmost island of Kyushu to the northernmost Hokkaido through the Japanese archipelago, a distance of 3,200 km – in 42 days, beating the earlier record of 52 days. Thirty-nine year old Norio Wada, ■ hotel manager in Tokyo, started on May ■ and ended his odyssey on June 18, shattering the 23-year-old record set by another adventurer, Naomi Uemura. Wada averaged 80km every day, and slept only for three to four hours each night.

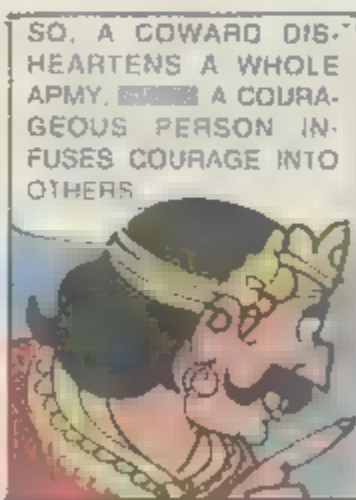
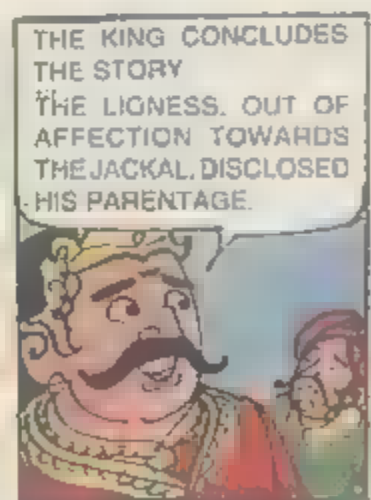
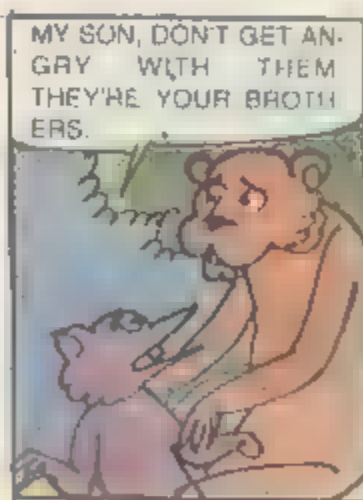
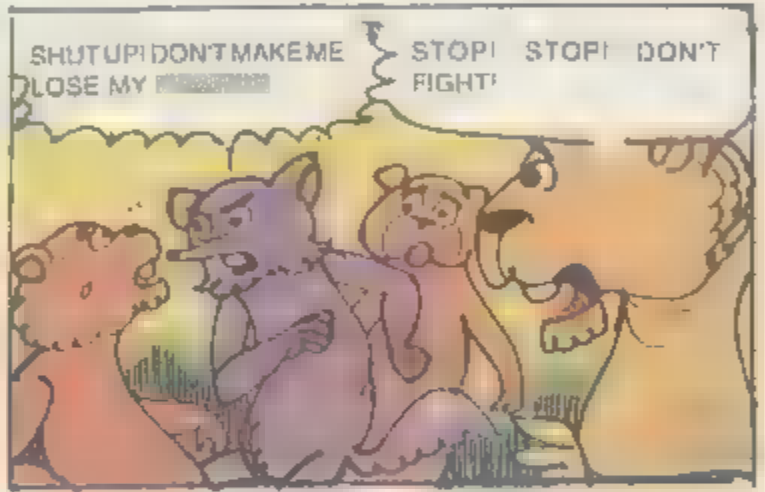
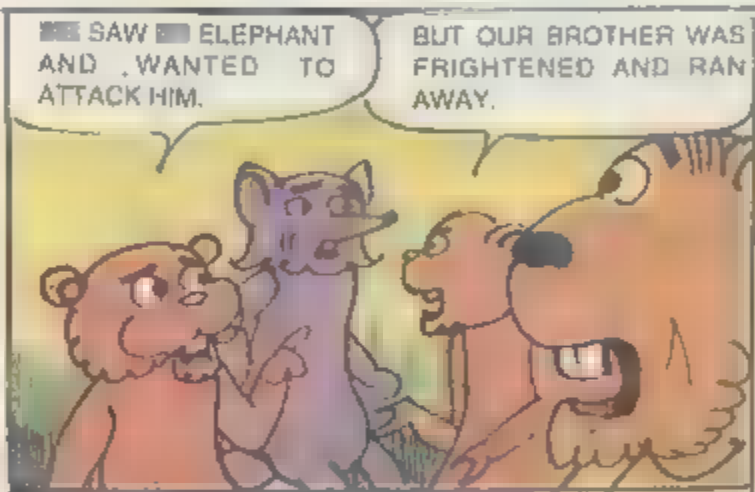
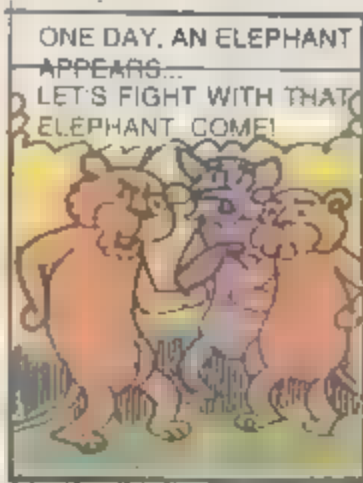
A Sleepless Record

And V.K. Mohammed of Manjeri, in Kerala, has not slept for 46 years. Believe it or not. Bappu, as he is affectionately called, was a normal man till the age of 35. Pain in one of his eyes could not be cured for several years and he was unable to sleep. Then it became a habit and sleep eluded him. Though 80, Bappu keeps good health and can properly hear without any aid

and read without spectacles. The pain has vanished – so also any desire to sleep. Friends, who cannot be with him always, try to tease him – that he might be at least re-

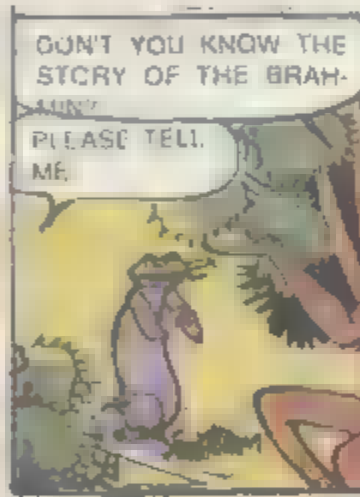
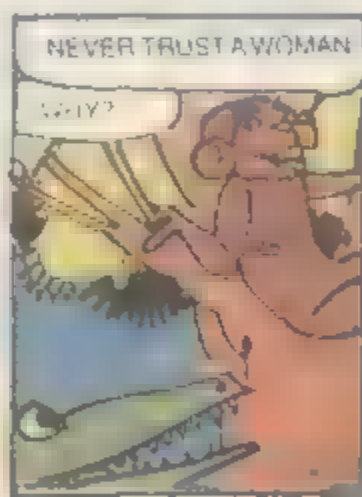
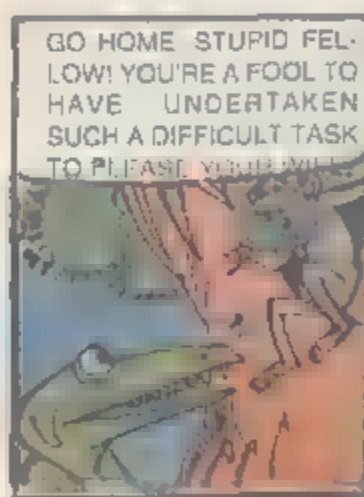


sorting to catnaps. Doctors have vouchsafed for his sleeplessness. And he is none the worse for it.

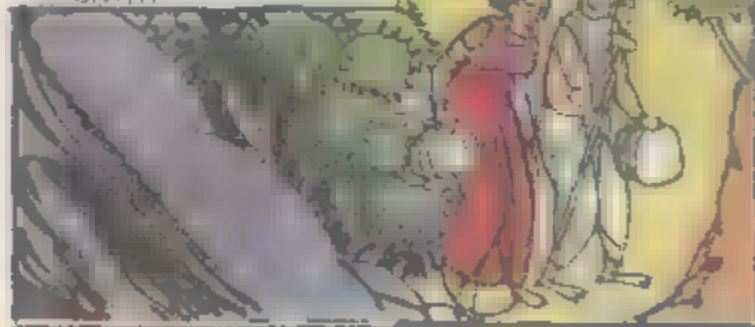


■ man's deeds are the touchstone of his greatness and littleness.

- Thirukkural



HE USED TO QUARREL WITH HIS PARENTS ALL DAY LONG. UNABLE TO BEAR IT HE LEFT HOME AND WENT OUT WITH HIS BELOVED WIFE FOR A FAR-OFF COUNTRY



One who attempts to teach a fool only betrays his foolishness; and the fool will think himself wise in his own conceit.

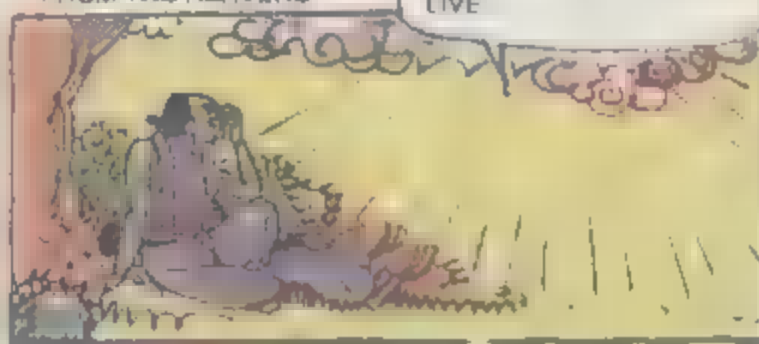
OH! WHAT HAS HAPPENED? MY GOD! SHE'S DEAD! I'VE LOST THE MOST PRECIOUS THING IN THE WORLD.



WHAT HAVE I TO LIVE FOR?



AS HE WAILS AND WEEPS FOR THE LOSS OF HIS WIFE HE HEARS A VOICE FROM THE HEAVENS



O' BRAHMIN OFFER HALF OF YOUR LIFE-SPAN TO YOUR WIFE SHE'LL LIVE

MERCIFUL GOD! I'M READY TO SURRENDER HALF OF MY LIFE TO MY WIFE



THE BRAHMIN THEN CHANTED MANTRAS



THE BRAHMIN'S EYES SITS UP AS IF FROM SLEEP



WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN FOR SUCH A LONG TIME?

TAKE THIS WATER



AFTER SOMETIME, THEY RESUME THEIR JOURNEY AND REACH A FOREST.



YOU WAIT HERE. I'LL GET YOU SOMETHING TO EAT.



TIME PASSES.

AH! FROM WHERE DOES THIS MUSIC COME! IT'S AS SWEET AS NECTAR



AAHHA...OAAOH...

If someone inflicts sorrow upon others in the morning, it will come upon him in the very evening.

THE BRAHMIN'S WIFE GOES IN THE DIRECTION OF THE MUSIC



THERE HE IS... THE SINGER. I LOVE HIM!

SIR! YOUR ENCHANTING MUSIC HAS CAPTIVATED ME. PLEASE MARRY ME



I'M A CRIPPLE. HOW CAN I MAKE YOU HAPPY?



BUT [REDACTED] INSISTS ON THEIR LIVING TOGETHER. SHE REVEALS [REDACTED] PLAN TO GET [REDACTED] OF HER HUSBAND



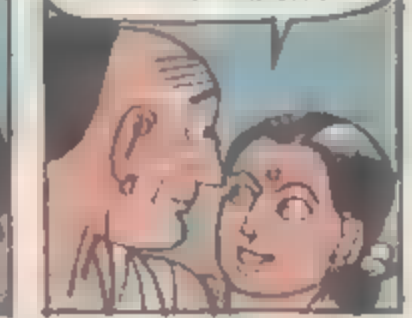
AFTER SOME TIME, THE [REDACTED] MIN RETURNS MY BELOVED! HERE'RE SOME DELICIOUS FRUITS



COME ON, TAKE THEM.



LET'S SHARE THEM WITH THIS POOR MAN! HE'S A CRIPPLE. I PITY HIM. LET'S TAKE WITH HIM WITH US TO THE CITY



SO, THE BRAHMIN CARRIES THE CRIPPLE ON HIS SHOULDERS TO PLEASE HIS FAITHLESS WIFE



AS THEY APPROACH THE CITY, THEY [REDACTED] FOR A WHILE [REDACTED] THE SIDE OF A WELL, THE TIRED BRAHMIN FALLS INTO A SLUM.



HE'S FAST ASLEEP. LET'S FINISH HIM!

Nothing is more unpleasant than death; yet even that becomes pleasant when charity cannot be exercised.

A GREAT STORY

The ancient world had four great epics: The *Ramayana* by Valmiki, the *Mahabharata* by Vyasa, and the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* by Homer. Later, we had a few more epics, like Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Goethe's *Faust*, and last but not the least, Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri*.

Beginning with this issue, we give you a simple narrative of Homer's two epics—an all-time great story of adventures. But there is much more in it than adventures—as you will see.

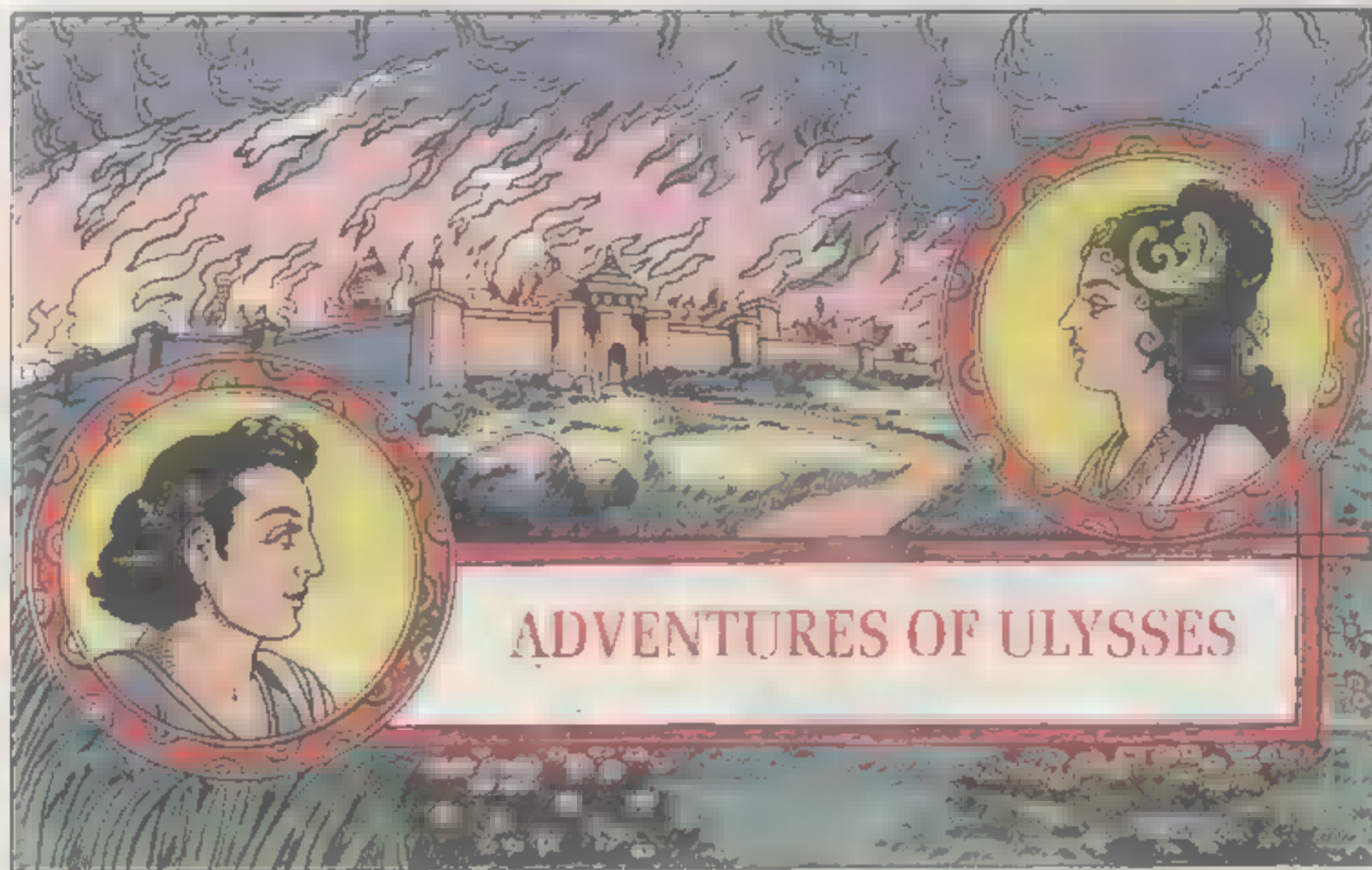
When did Homer live? Probably some eight hundred years before Christ, in Greece. The city of Troy, which is the backdrop of the first part of the story, has been discovered, in their ruins. Homer was blind—and he roamed about singing his wonderful composition in a melodious voice.

Many believe that there is a lot of truth in this story.

Follow the serial and enter the spirit of a bygone era.

SPOT THE TEN DIFFERENCES





ADVENTURES OF ULYSSES

Long long ago, when the gods and goddesses mixed freely with men and women, a beautiful goddess named Thetis was to marry a human being, Peleus.

Just as we had many kingdoms in India in ancient times, so had they in Greece. Peleus was the prince of a small but prosperous Greek kingdom.

The marriage between Thetis and Peleus was a very happy event, performed with great pomp and show. All the gods and goddesses had been invited to witness it, along with kings and nobles.

But the guardians on both sides had left one goddess out. She was Eris, the goddess of Discord. Wherever she went, a quarrel would

break out. And who would like a quarrel on as happy an occasion as a wedding?

But in life, there are things which bring sorrow if one does them and which also bring sorrow if one does not do them. Eris was not invited, true, but she got scent of the event and came there, hiding from everybody. She did not tarry long. She just left a golden apple on a dining table and quietly slipped away.

But the mischief had been done. On the apple was written a line: "For the most beautiful."

"For the most beautiful, is that so? Very well, I will, then, take it," said Venus, the goddess of Beauty, as she advanced towards the table, her hand extended to pick up the



apple.

"Wait!" said Athene. "What's true beauty if not a perfect harmony between one's spirit and one's physical appearance? I have that. The apple belongs to me." She too walked towards the apple.

"Do not forget that the Queen of Heaven is here. None has any right to that prize when I am present." This came from Hera, the wife of Zeus, indeed a great beauty.

The joy and serenity which prevailed till then were shattered in no time. If some guests shouted that the apple must go to Venus, some others were sure that Athene de-

served it. Then there were those who insisted that Hera alone was entitled to it.

Above the shrieks and shouts of the guests was heard the roaring voice of Zeus: "Silence!"

The hullabaloo stopped immediately. Everybody looked at Zeus.

"The goddesses cannot decide by themselves who among them is more beautiful than the other two. All those present here have developed prejudices, either in favour of one goddess or another. You cannot be prejudiced and impartial at the same time," said Zeus.

"Who will then pick up the golden apple?" asked some of the guests.

"Let Iris pick it up and keep it with her for the time being. It will be given to an impartial judge. He'll decide which of the three goddesses should have it." This was the decision of Zeus. Nobody could object to it.

Zeus did not take long to decide on the impartial judge. Miles away, in a small hut on a mountain, lived a shepherd named Paris. He was a very handsome young man himself, and his eyes were not spoilt by prejudices. Iris, the messenger of gods, was instructed to hand over the apple to him. The three goddesses were to

meet him soon. He could pass on the fruit to the one who, according to him, was the most beautiful among them.

Was this young man ■ mere shepherd? He was not. He had a strange past. More than twenty years ago, a forest-dweller was surprised to see a little human child playing with a few bear-cubs, in front of ■ cave. The man kept himself in hiding and saw, ■ little later, ■ she-bear returning to the spot. She lay down and suckled not only the bear-cubs, but also the human child.

At an opportune moment the forest-dweller carried the little boy away to his own home. There the boy grew up. His foster father gave him the name Paris.

Paris was extremely courageous and strong. He played with the young men of the hamlets around the forest and learnt different sports and games from whomsoever he could. He could run, ride, jump, and fight better than any champion.

One day, he heard that Priam, the King of Troy, was holding an athletic tournament. Paris went to see it. Priam's own sons, the princes of Troy, were the star attractions in the tournament. Particularly, the eldest prince, Hector, excelled all the



competitors in every item.

Paris joined the tournament. He challenged all the victors and surpassed all of them in every athletic feat. At first, the sons of Priam ■ surprised; then they felt humiliated. Soon their mood changed into one of terrible jealousy for the stranger. How can a shepherd boy walk over them with all the trophies?

Under some flimsy pretext, they surrounded Paris and were about to kill him when their sister, Princess Cassandra, rushed forward and threw her arms around Paris.

"He is none but our brother!" she exclaimed. "Can't you recognise him

by his features?"

Indeed, Paris was a son of King Priam. On the eve of his birth, his mother had dreamt that she was delivered of a burning torch. Flames from the torch leaped onto different buildings and destroyed the beautiful city.

Following the advice given by the chief priest of the king, the newborn babe was left on the mountains of Ida.

Now the king and the queen of Troy welcomed their lost son with great affection. But Paris went back to his cottage on the mountain and lived the life of a shepherd.

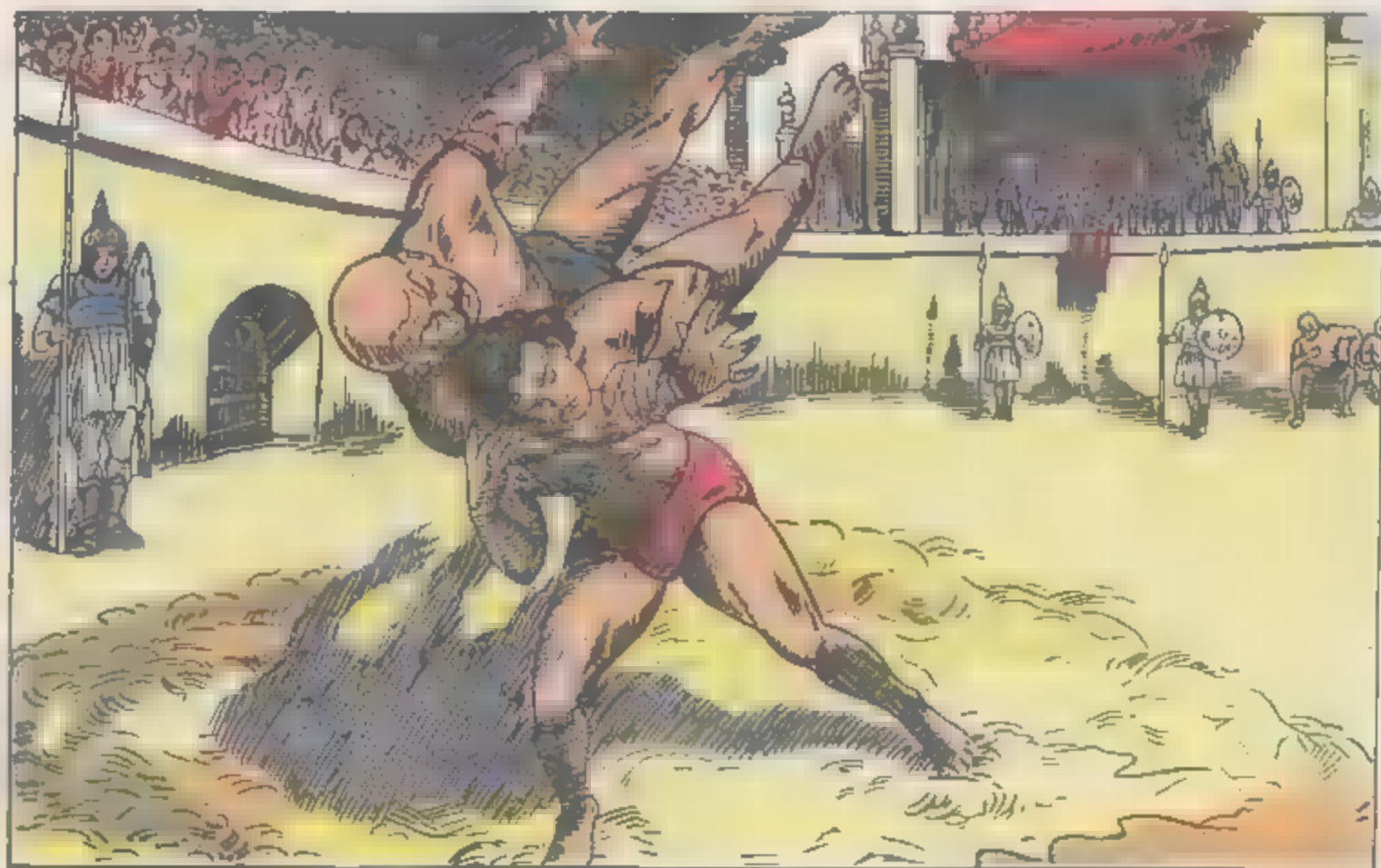
Now, to go back to our story, Iris,

the messenger of Zeus, met Paris and told him what he must do. Paris was amused. Soon, the three goddesses appeared before him. It was a wonderful sight for Paris. Each of the three had a splendid and radiant appearance; each one was indescribably beautiful. Whom should he award the golden apple?

First, goddess Hera stepped forward and told Paris, "Give the apple to me. I'll give you a great amount of wealth and power."

"I'll help you win fame and praise—through your noble deeds, if you give the apple to me," said Athene.

Then stepped forward Venus. "I'll





arrange for the most beautiful woman to marry you—if the apple becomes mine."

Paris smiled and bowed and gave the apple to Venus. He was no more

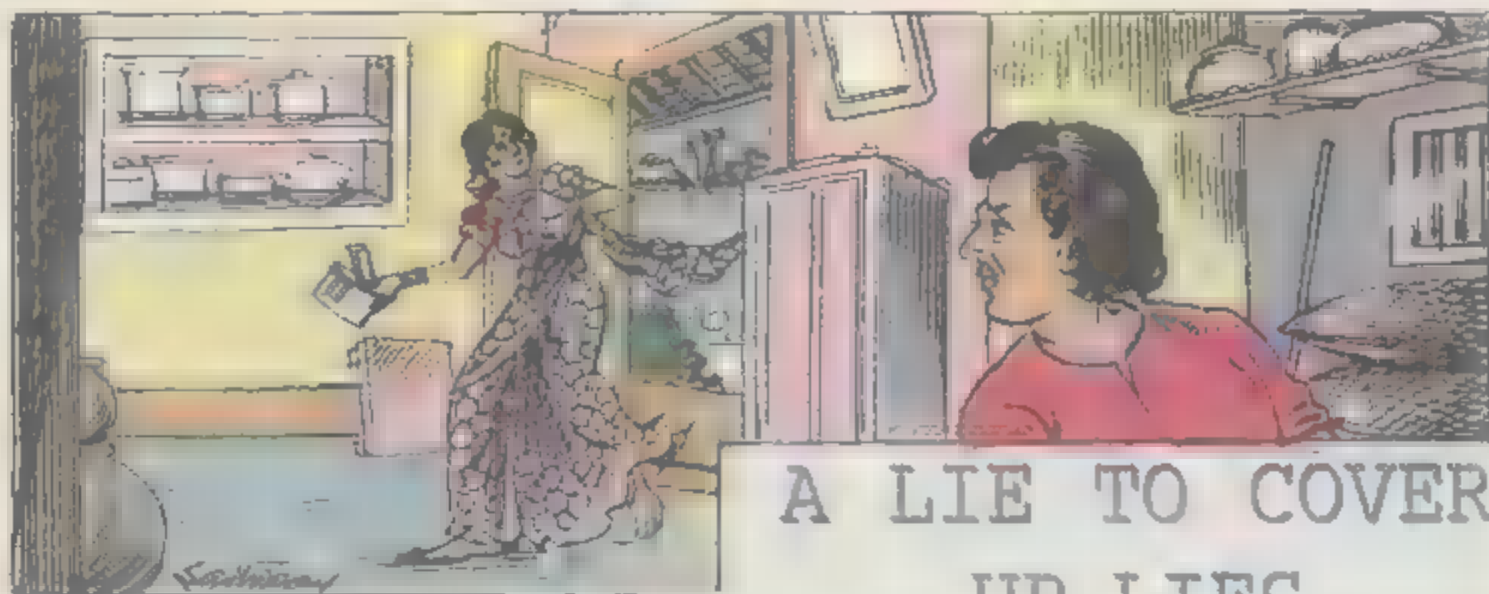
impartial. He had been tempted. His decision to award the apple was not based on his free judgement, but on the prize offered to him.

—To continue

Teacher: Did your father help you with this sum?

Boy (nonchalantly): No, miss. I got the whole thing wrong myself.





A LIE TO COVER UP LIES

Paramu and Pushpa were newly-weds. The bride came off a wealthy family. She was an only child of her parents and naturally they showered all their affection on her. "Oh! She'll live like a princess!" they used to tell their friends. She was fond of eating. They saw to it that she was given whatever she liked to eat. She liked different delicacies and whenever she felt like eating them, they were promptly prepared. But this became a problem in Paramu's house.

Before his marriage, Paramu stayed alone and had to cook his own food. He always tried to economise and was, therefore, frugal. After taking his bride home, he showed her where he had stored the items needed for cooking. "This vessel has rice. You'll find the measure in it. Take two measures, and that'll be sufficient for both of

us. When I was alone, I used to take just one measure for myself."

Pushpa cooked rice, taking only two measures. In the first week itself, she thought she was not getting enough to eat and that she was going hungry. One night, finding Paramu fast asleep, she tip-toed to the kitchen and quietly cooked some sweet rice and ate it. Paramu was quite oblivious of what was happening and this encouraged Pushpa to make it a daily practice. After Paramu went to bed and enjoyed sound sleep, she would sneak into the kitchen and make whatever she liked and ate it all up.

One night, she kept the plate with the delicacy she made and went out to the courtyard to wash her hands. When she returned, she was shocked to find a stranger standing in the kitchen. "I'm a thief. If you behave properly, I shall also be good to you; but if you make a noise or create a

nuisance for me, I shall kill you!" he warned her.

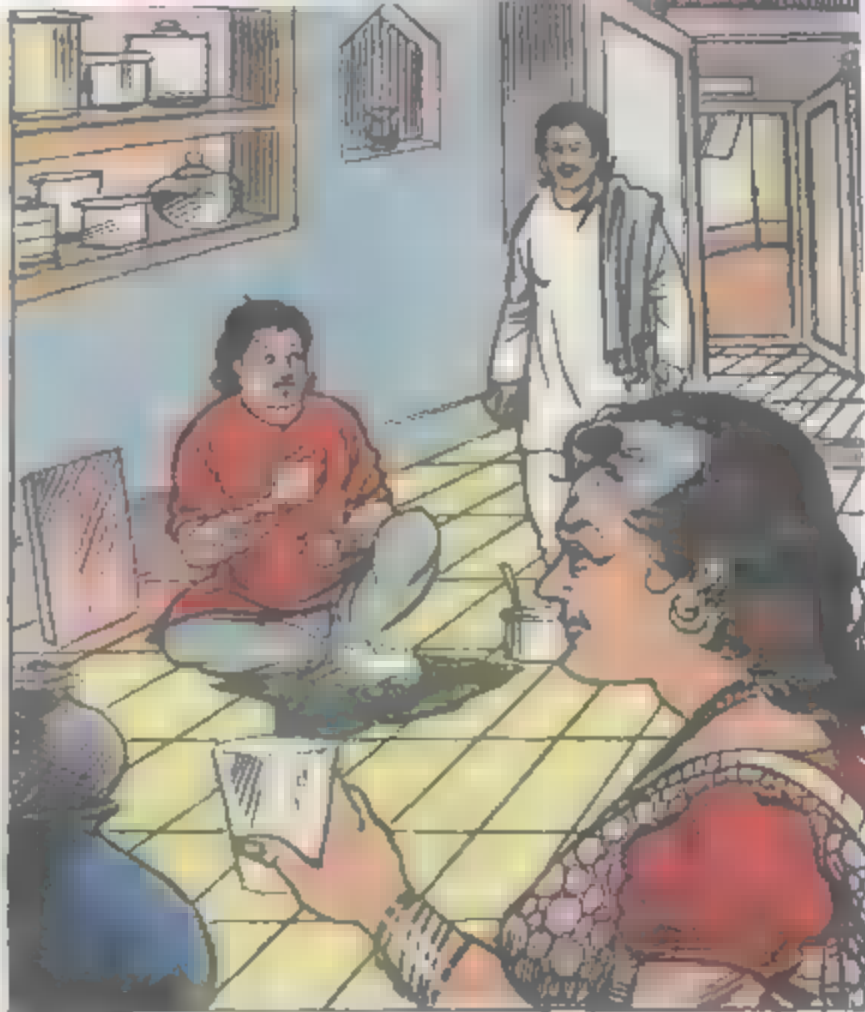
Paramu woke up on hearing some noise. He did not get up but called out from his bed. "What's that noise, Pushpa?"

She was in a dilemma. What would she tell her husband? And how would she manage the thief? It would be a shame if her husband came to know that she had the habit of cooking food on the sly and eating it. "My husband will be here any moment. If he were to know that you're a thief, he might give you a good beating. Sit down before the plate and start eating," she told the thief.

The next moment, Paramu appeared at the kitchen. Before he could ask anything, Pushpa said, "He's my cousin. He was unable to attend our wedding. He came here a little while ago."

As Paramu greeted him, all three heard knockings on the door. Paramu went and opened the door and saw two policemen who asked him, "Did a thief come this side? We're looking for him."

"Yes, someone has come, but he's my wife's cousin. She's talking to him," answered Paramu. The policemen appeared satisfied with



his reply and quietly went away.

When he went back to the kitchen, he found her cousin ready to go. "He's in a hurry. Now that he has been able to meet both of us, he says he would leave immediately," said Pushpa.

Paramu protested, "What's the hurry? He has come here for the first time. How can you send him away like that? No, you get ready the cot in the front room. Let him rest for the night. We shall discuss his departure in the morning."

Pushpa did as her husband told her. When the thief was about to lie down, she told him, "I saved you



from my husband and the policemen; you must now reciprocate by quietly leaving the place after resting for a while. And mind you, don't steal anything!"

She went back to bed but had ■ restless time. She got some sleep after a long time and so got up late. Paramu was still asleep. She ran to the front room and got the shock of her life. The thief had disappeared, and he had turned the room topsy-turvy. "Ha! Ah!" she let out a cry.

Paramu heard the cry, got up, and ran to find out what had happened. "That thief! He has got away, after stealing a lot of things!"

she stammered out with difficulty.

"Thief, did you say?" Paramu could not believe his ears. "But you told me he's your cousin. Who then was he?"

"My lord, he *was* a thief, and not my cousin," confessed Pushpa. "I told you a lie." She then explained to him how she was getting up every night to cook something for herself and how she found the thief in the kitchen the previous night. Pushpa was in tears.

Paramu took pity on her. "Don't worry, Pushpa. We haven't lost anything. Look at this. The thief has left ■ letter for us. Read that."

The man had written : *"I was unemployed and was going hungry. That's why I took to thieving. I entered your house for stealing some valuables. When the policemen came, I was almost sure that I would be caught. But your wife saved me from them. However, I soon realised that she was telling a BIG lie to cover up a small lie. If that was her predicament, then you can imagine my own state of affairs. I've come to the conclusion that by stealing, I won't solve my problem. I must do honest work and earn a livelihood. I have decided to desist from thieving. I'm*





sure, your wife will not tell lies."

Pushpa was stunned when she read the letter. "Please forgive me, my lord!" she pleaded with Paramu.

"Forgive? Why?" Paramu asked, in bewilderment. "In fact, I should blame myself. I was not able to find what your wishes were, what your needs were. I had got up earlier than you and had come to the room

and seen the letter. Henceforth, you may cook whatever you like. You must share with me all that you cook! All right?"

When Pushpa saw Paramu smiling at her, instead of getting angry with her, she felt much relieved. She decided not to overspend, but limit her need for any extra food.

"Boys, tell me the signs of the zodiac. You, Ned?"

"Taurus the Bull."

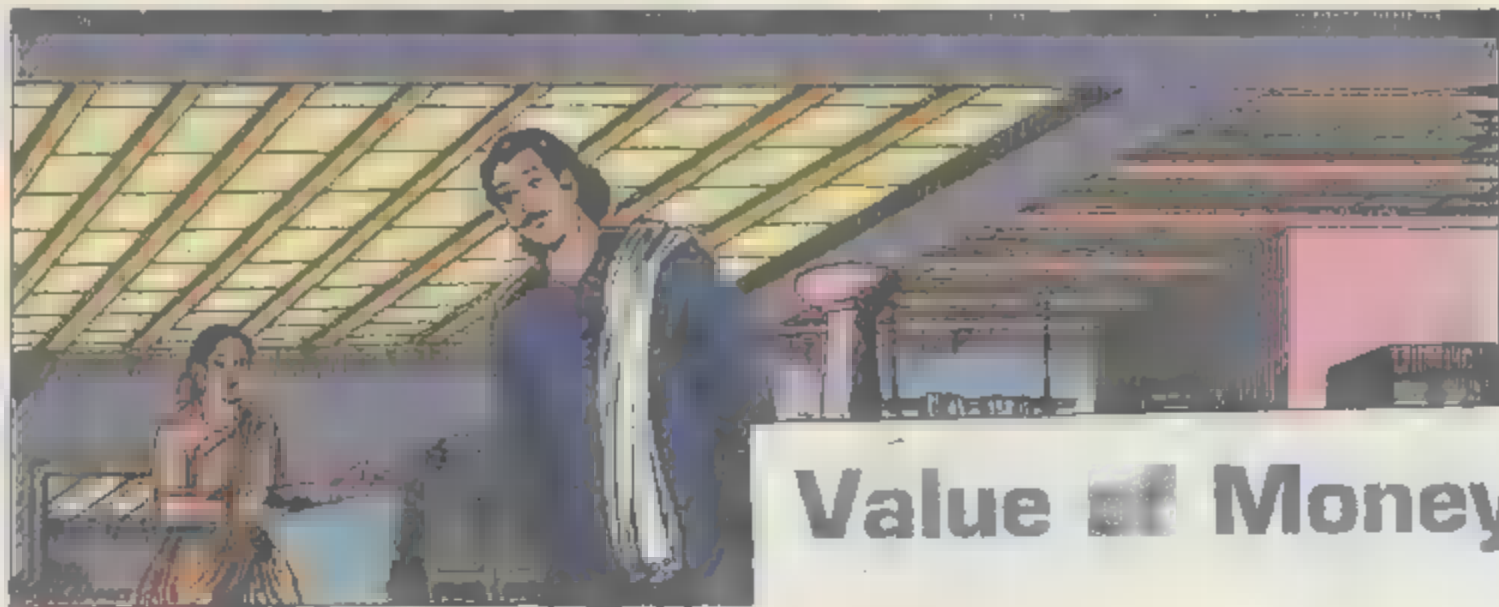
"Right. You, Harold, another one."

"Cancer the Crab."

"Right. It's now your turn, Albert."

"Mickey the Mouse."





Value of Money

Muthayya was a moneylender. He was considerate to all those who approached him for a loan. He would find out from them why they needed money and appreciated their problems. So much so, his clientele increased. It came to a pass where he was unable to attend to all of them whenever there was a crowd. So he, took four persons as his assistants.

Ramayya of the same place was watching how Muthayya's business was thriving. He wished to start the same business. Muthayya was charging interest at the rate of fifteen per cent. Ramayya thought, if he were to charge only half of it, then people would flock to him and he would then have a better business than what Muthayya enjoyed. He decided he would charge only seven-and-a-half per cent.

He disclosed his plans to his wife. Krishnamma was an intelligent

woman. She was not very happy about her husband doing money-lending business. She thought for a while and said, "Don't do anything hasty. We need not loan money to anybody. How are we certain that the loans would be returned in time? We don't know much about these things. Though Muthayya is charging a high interest, the number of people borrowing money from him is only increasing. Moreover, he is also able to recover the loans he has given. If you were to charge less interest, anybody would like to take a loan from you and may not care to repay in time. I don't think we'll succeed in this business. Also, we may incur the displeasure of Muthayya. After all, isn't he related to us? Why should we alienate him? You may consult him, if you so wish."

Ramayya liked his wife's sugges-

tion. He went to Muthayya, who listened to what Ramayya had to say. "It's good that you came today. You didn't bungle by starting this business. Everybody wouldn't be able to carry on moneylending. I've experienced all its worst aspects. In fact, I've been contemplating expanding my business. But I'll need some money for that. Now that you were keen to start business and charge only seven-and-a-half per cent, why don't you give me a loan of the money you wanted to invest? I shall give you ten per cent interest. I may not be able to give you that much amount immediately; but I shall return the money and pay the interest also at the end of five years."

Ramayya found the proposition rather attractive. He did not have to run a business, yet he would get an income by merely sitting at home. The only snag was, he would get back his money and interest only after five years. Suppose he needed the money earlier? He posed the problem to Muthayya.

"That shouldn't bother you, Ramayya," Muthayya assured him. "When such a need comes, I shall give you the money you require and you pay me only twelve per cent interest. You won't lose your ten per



cent interest ■ the money you give me and whatever I owe you will only double. The faster you return my money, you won't lose much."

Ramayya said he would consider the proposal and get back to Muthayya. He explained everything to Krishnamma. "That sounds good," she commented. "We're getting money every day by selling rice and coconuts from our farm. If that can fetch some interest, then why can't we give it to Muthayya as a loan? And when we are ourselves hard pressed for money, we can borrow it from Muthayya. Yes, you may take to him whatever is available with



us." Ramayya took the money to Muthayya, who told him it would be repaid with interest after five years.

Ramayya had a rich neighbour called Veerayya. He was a spendthrift. The two had been friends from their boyhood. So, whenever Veerayya came back with an empty pocket after spending all his money, Ramayya used to help him. One day, Veerayya was in dire need of money and asked his friend for a loan.

Muthayya regretted he would be unable to help him unless, of course, he borrowed money from Muthayya. "You're spending money unneces-

sarily, Veerayya," he tried to offer some advice to his friend. "You keep some money with Muthayya; you can earn up to ten per cent interest."

Veerayya did not find the advice acceptable. He went and told his wife. "We know what to do with our money," said Kannamma, angrily. "We don't need anybody's advice."

Veerayya somehow or other crossed the hurdle, and fortunately, his farm gave him a record yield that year, and it brought in a lot of money. There was a clean saving of three thousand rupees. Kannamma wished to buy a diamond necklace. The one she selected was priced five thousand rupees but she had determined to buy it. She did not mind even if her husband had to borrow money to pay the full price.

"Your friend sold his coconuts only yesterday and I heard he got five thousand rupees," she told Veerayya. "Why don't you ask for a loan of two thousand rupees? Let's buy that necklace before someone else picks it up."

Veerayya went to Ramayya a second time. "Why do you want to buy a diamond necklace now? You may wait till you make some more money. Till then, you take that three thousand rupees to Muthayya. He'll

give you ten per cent interest." Ramayya tried to advise him.

Veerayya was not ready to heed his friend's advice. "If she can't buy the necklace, she may even end her life. You must give me a loan of two thousand rupees," he insisted of his friend.

Ramayya wanted to teach him a lesson. "All right, I shall go about it this way. I shall take five thousand rupees to Muthayya. And I shall get a loan of two thousand rupees for you from him for twelve per cent. You pay the interest to him. Are you agreeable?"

"Borrowing money and pay interest?" said Veerayya unbelievably. "I thought *you* would help me with that amount."

"No, my friend, that's not possible," said Ramayya. "I can only think of taking a loan from Muthayya. I don't like to waste my money, like you do."

Veerayya ultimately agreed to take a loan. He handed the money to Kannamma and soon she sported the diamond necklace with pride. The thought that they had to pay interest every month made them cut down all unnecessary expenditure. They saved money and after five months, Veerayya went to Ramayya



to return the loan. He gave him two thousand one hundred rupees.

"I gave you only two thousand rupees," said Ramayya.

"The extra hundred is towards interest," said Veerayya.

"What! Interest? I should take interest on the amount I gave you?" Ramayya almost shouted at his friend. "You haven't still understood me, my good friend!" He was really cross with Veerayya.

"Didn't you tell me that you would give all your money to Muthayya and get me a loan from him?" reminded Veerayya.

"Yes, that's true," Ramayya con-



firmed. "But then, it was I who took the loan from Muthayya, not you. I shall pay whatever interest is the amount to Muthayya. I never meant that *you* should pay interest to me. I didn't make it very clear that day, because I wanted you to reduce your spending. I hope you have at

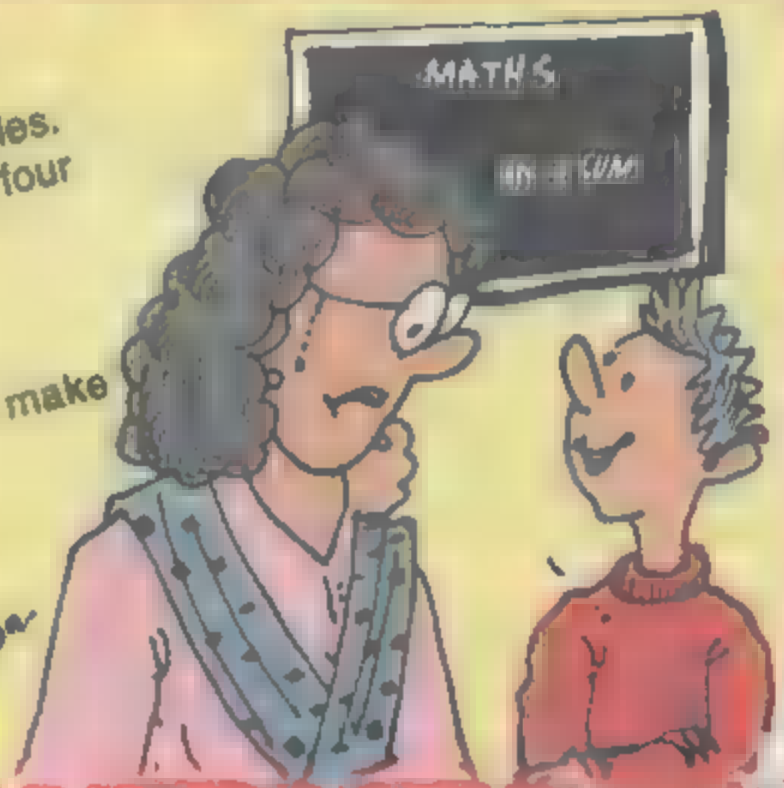
least now realised the value of money."

Veerayya smiled. "You've really taught me a lesson, my friend. "I shall take your advice and see that whatever I save I give it to Muthayya interest, and some income while sitting quiet at home."

Maths Teacher: Here are four apples. Tell me, how would you divide the four apples among five children?

Bright student: Miss, I would make applesauce!

A. Anand



VENERATED BY HINDUS, BUDDHISTS

Those who are familiar with the *Ramayana*, would remember that, after Sita's abduction by Ravana and her refusal to become his wife, she was kept in a garden in Lanka, where she spent her time beneath an Ashoka tree. It was also here that Hanuman met Sita during his search for her.

Ashoka, in Sanskrit, means 'without sorrow' (shoka means sorrow). Variations of the word occur in other languages — like Aseka in Oriya, Ashopalava in Gujarati, Asogu in Tamil, Asokamu in Telugu.

The tree is venerated by both the Hindus and Buddhists. It is said that Prince Siddharta (later to become Gautama Buddha) was born to Queen Maya in a grove of Ashoka trees in Lumbini. Years later, a sapling of the very tree under which he was born was sent to Lanka by Emperor Asoka, and it was planted in Anuradhapura where it still exists.

The Ashoka is called an ornamental tree, and grows wild wherever there is a wet climate. It is a medium-sized tree and reaches a maximum height of only 10 metres. The branches spread and the foliage is thick and evergreen. Because of the heavy foliage, the branches tend to droop towards the ground; the trunk, however, is straight.

The flowers are yellow, but turn orange and later a bright red. Small in size, they grow in clusters close to the branches. The flowers are used for worship. Like the leaves, they are used in medicines.



BOOKS BEHIND GREAT FAITHS



THE ADI GRANTH

"There is One God.
He is supreme truth.
He, the Creator,
■ without fear and without hate.
He, the Omnipresent,
Pervades the universe.
He is not born,
Nor does He die to be born again.
By His Grace shalt thou worship Him.

Before time itself
There ■■■ truth.
When time began to run its course.
He ■■■ the truth.
Even now, He is the truth.
And evermore shall truth prevail."

Thus sang Nanak (1469 - 1539), the founder of the Sikh faith. He had been assured by the Supreme Lord, "Nanak, he whom you bless will be blessed by Me; he to whom you are benevolent shall receive My benevolence. I am the Great God, the Supreme Creator. Thou art the Guru..."

Nanak's teachings were carried forward and strengthened by the other Sikh Gurus who succeeded him one after another: Guru Angad, Guru Amar Das, and Guru Ram Das. It was the next Guru, Arjun (1563 - 1606), who for the first time compiled the anthology of the sayings of the Gurus and his own compositions. Thus was made the first sacred book of the Sikhs, the Adī Granth. The book was placed in the temple at Amritsar in 1604.



The 'Granth Sahib', ■ the book came to be popularly called, does not confine itself to the works of the Sikh Gurus, but contains several spiritual compositions of Hindus and Jains.

The compositions are marked by devotion. Even when high philosophical thoughts mark them, they ■ written in a language that is simple and lucid.

As Sikhism drew its inspiration from all the major religions prevailing in India in the 15th century, we find in it the elements of different faiths, but all presented in a highly harmonious way.

The Granth Sahib is revered, read and recited not only by the Sikhs, but also by the Hindus of northern India.

(Based on *A History of the Sikhs* by Khushwant Singh)

The word Sikh is derived from *Sishya*. Sikhism is thus the religion of ten Gurus and their Sishyas. A Sikh is one who is willing to lay down his life for the sake of his Guru. The ten Gurus are: Guru Nanak (1469-1539), Guru Angad (1504-1552), Guru Amar Das (1479-1574), Guru Ram Das (1534-1581), Guru Arjun Dev (1563-1606), Guru Hargobind (1595-1644), Guru Hari Rai (1630-1661), Guru Hari Krishan (1656-1664), Guru Tegh Bahadur (1621-1674), and Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708). The term Guru is used only for these ten Gurus, and for the Adi Granth Sahib.

This is what Guru Nanak said about the creation of the world :

*He fixed the heavens without pillars
by the utterance of a word,
Having created the sun and moon,
He infused His light into them,
Thou has no father or mother, who begot Thee?
Thou are devoid of all form, outline, or caste.*

Guru Nanak has mentioned that God created the world out of five elements. The whole world is a wonderful creation of God and shows His power and glory.

DO YOU KNOW?

- Two brothers founded the kingdom of Vijayanagar. Who were they?
- A famous writer wished that the city he lived in be called after himself. Name the writer.
- After Hindi, which four Indian languages are spoken by the largest number of people?
- Who swam an ocean for the longest distance? When? Where?
- Name the great Sanskrit grammarian of ancient India. What is the name of his work?
- Who invented the bicycle? When?
- Where will you go to see the Queen of Deccan and the Deccan Queen?
- Who is the founder of the modern city-state of Singapore? When?
- What is the peculiarity of the Bombay Duck?
- What is the name of Japan's parliament?
- Pele is the most famous footballer of the 20th century. What is his record?
- How large is the earth?
- Which country has the largest number of volcanoes in the world?
- Three Indian children recently swam the English channel. One swimmer is credited to have swum four channels in five weeks. Name the swimmer.
- There is an animal which can run under water at high speed. Which is the animal?

ANSWERS

- Harhara and Bukka.
- The French author Victor Hugo.
- Bengali, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu.
- Benson Huggard, of the U.S.A., in 1875, from Florida to the Bahamas - a distance of 173 miles.
- Panini, who lived in the 4th century B.C. His work is called *Ashtadhyayi*.
- Kirkpatrick Macmillan, in 1839.
- Pune, whose popular name is Queen of Deccan, and which connects with Bombay by the daily superfast train called the Deccan Queen.
- Sir Stamford Raffles, in 1819.
- It is not a bird, but a fish!
- The Diet.
- This Brazilian footballer scored as many as 1,216 goals in 1,254 games between 1956 and 1974.
- 510,100,500 square kilometres.
- Indonesia - some 167 of the 455 volcanoes that have been identified in that country.
- Florence Chadwick, of the U.S.A. He swam the English Channel, the Strait of Gibraltar, the Bosphorus, and the Dardanelles in 1953.
- The Hippopotamus. It can stay under water for up to 10 minutes.

THE DANCING KETTLE



It was a sunny spring morning. A wee little badger frolicked on the soft green meadow. He tumbled, hopped, skipped, and even turned somersaults over the daisies and the daffodils. He squeaked in delight as he chased the butterflies and dodged the floating shadow of the clouds. Suddenly, he stood erect on his hind legs and beat his tummy like a drum, with his furry paws. It did produce an amusing sound and alerted the grasshoppers and the crickets. Lastly, he did not forget to blow a

kiss to the shy cuckoo who sat singing perched on a branch.

But alas! So carefree and unmindful was the badger, lost in his happiness, that he failed to detect a trap hidden under the grass. He soon fell into it, and the harder he tried to get out of it, the harder the noose tightened round his paw. He cried in pain.

A poor woodcutter, who was passing by, heard his frantic screams and rushed to the spot.

"O dear! A helpless little creature



is caught in a trap!" he exclaimed, and at once set it free.

"Now, little Friend, run home before the hunter traps you again," said the woodcutter, gently stroking the ruffled fur of the animal.

The badger burst into tears of gratitude, overcome by his rescuer's warmth towards him.

"How can I ever repay you?" he asked.

"I'll be happy if you reach your home safe and sound," replied the woodcutter with a smile, as he turned and resumed walking.

The little badger was in real dilemma. 'How can such kindness go

unrewarded?' he thought.

Suddenly, an idea struck the grateful badger's mind. He called his one magical power and began to change himself into a kettle.

His body rounded and formed the beautiful ancient pot. His tail gracefully curved into the handle and his furry paws shrank to become the four legs. His eyes remained where they were and the spout of the kettle sprouted out of his tiny bewhiskered nose. Trip-trop, trippety-trop, ran the kettle close behind the woodcutter, as he unsuspectingly continued on his way.

Soon, the poor man reached his humble dwelling. As he lowered his basket at the doorstep, the kettle quietly stepped into it. The woodcutter's wife, who came to greet him, caught sight of the unusual ware in it.

"Oh! Oh! What have you brought today, dear husband?" she asked, and they both looked at it in silent admiration.

"I must have picked it up absentmindedly. But, surely, this tumble-town hut of ours is no fitting place for such a lovely ware," said the woodcutter.

"Let's offer it to the temple," suggested his wife, and he agreed

with her.

So off the woodcutter went to the temple in the town and offered it to the priest. He accepted it happily, for it seemed to be a valuable treasure.

One day, the priest had some important guests for tea. So he thought it was a good occasion to make use of the wonderful kettle.

"Oh! What a marvellous piece of art!" exclaimed the visitors the moment they saw it.

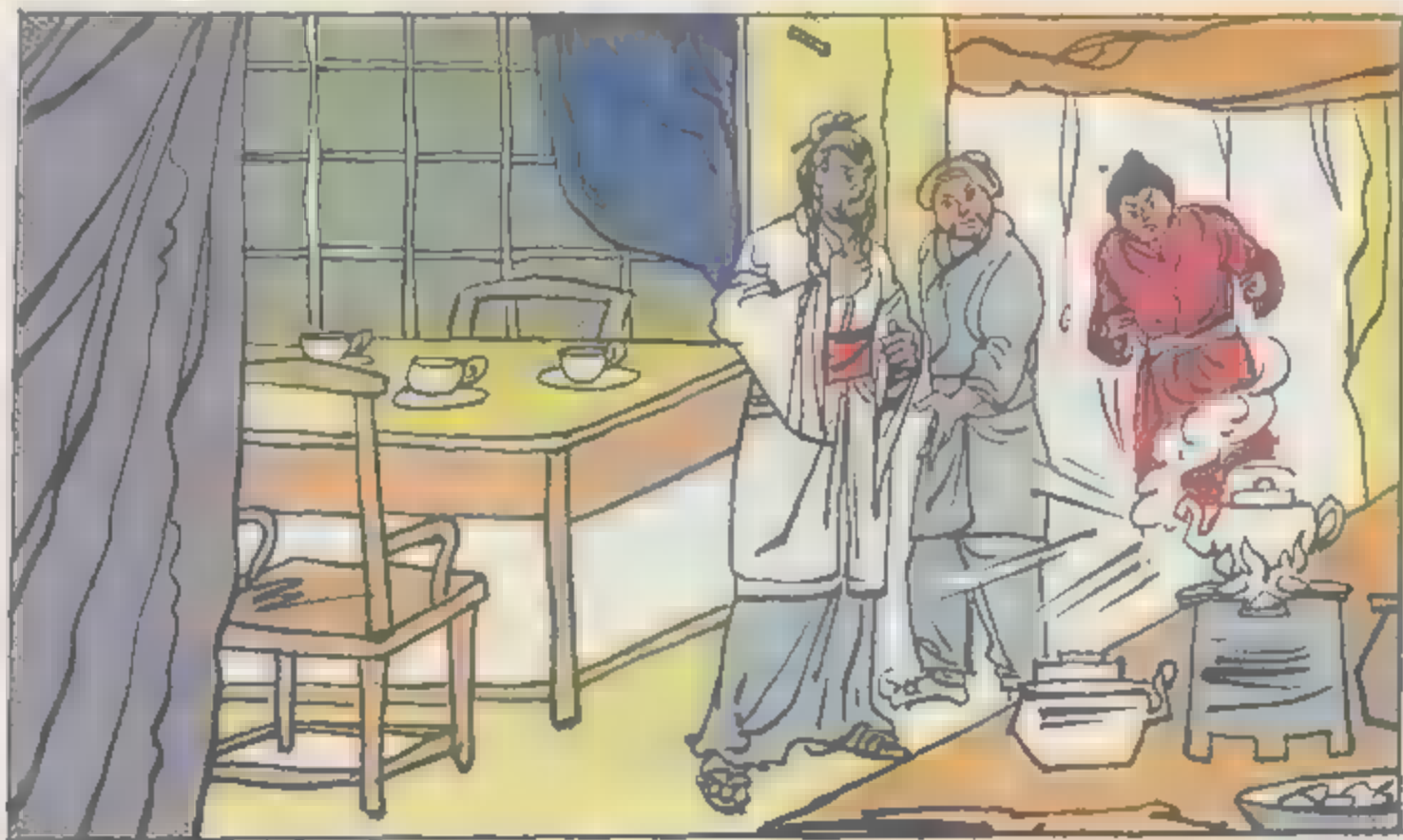
Its proud owner filled it with water and placed it over the brazier. He had but begun laying the table for the famous Tea Ceremony when he heard a painful little cry.

"Oh! Oh! Oh! It's too hot! It's too hot!"

Amazed, everybody looked in the direction of the kettle. What did they see? The kettle had sprouted a pointed nose, a fluffy tail, and the furry paws of a badger. It jumped off the fire and tumbled on the floor with a splash. It hopped and skipped and rolled round and round, leaving a trail of fume behind him. But when it cooled down, it turned into the kettle it had been and remained still and innocent as ever.

"The kettle is bewitched!" said one.

"No, a ghost dwells in it," added another.



The bewildered priest hurried to the woodcutter and, after relating all that had happened, returned the pot to him.

At night, the woodcutter carefully placed the kettle on the table and went to sleep. He had but begun to dream when he was awakened by a soft, gentle voice.

"Master Woodcutter, would you mind listening to me?"

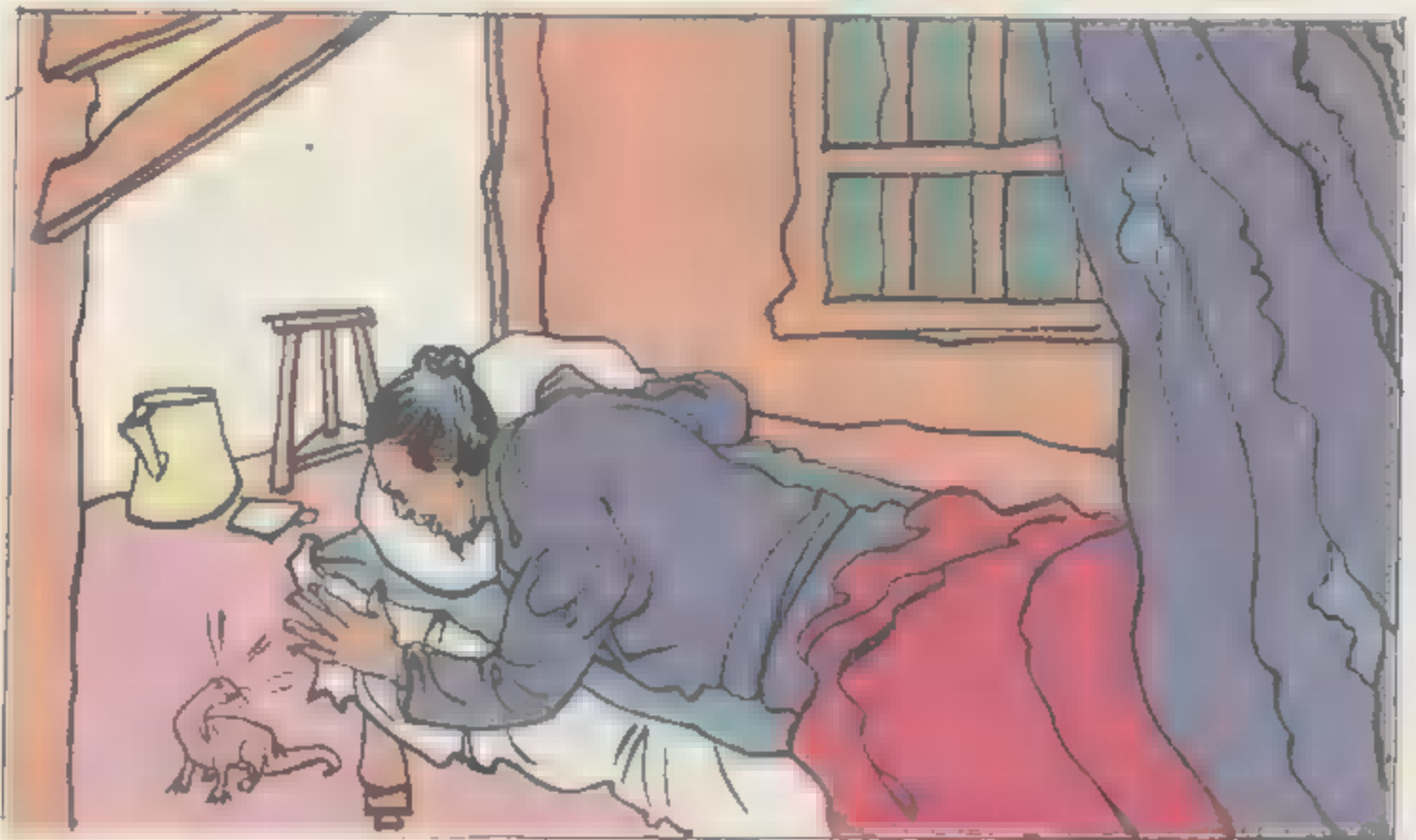
The man woke up rubbing his eyes and, to his astonishment, saw the kettle standing beside his head. It had sprouted the bewhiskered nose, fluffy tail, and the furry paws of the badger.

"Do not be startled, O my res-

cuer," said the wee little animal. "I wanted to do a good turn to you for saving me. So, I changed myself into the kettle and hopped into your basket. In fact, I had hoped that you would sell me in the market for a small fortune. But both you and your wife proved to be rather unselfish and offered me to the temple. My sole intention was to do something for you. So, I planned this trick to make the priest hand me over to you again."

Here the badger paused, and his words touched the very core of the good woodcutter's heart.

"Dear friend, I can never dare to sell you. For, who knows how you



will be treated by your master!" said the woodcutter, affectionately.

"I'll entertain people and you'll make your fortune. You know, I'm quite a good actor," chuckled the wee little creature.

The badger began to perform. So amused was the woodcutter that he laughed and laughed and laughed... and finally did see some promise in the badger's proposal.

The following morning, the woodcutter and his wife were busy erecting a platform in front of their dwelling and they even put up a streaming banner that read:

**Come, ■■■■ folks young and old,
Watch the wonderful kettle bold,
Do a pirouette and ■ dance,
On the tightrope hurriedly prance.**

The news spread like wild fire and people from far and near soon gathered at the woodcutter's humble dwelling. It was indeed a large crowd, full of colour and gaiety. From young children to grandmas and grandpas, from the town's mayor to the cobbler and the farmer, everybody came to watch the magic kettle.

A bell rang and the curtain rolled back and the wee little kettle performed as everybody looked on in

breathless wonder. The excited audience cheered and jeered after each act, yelling in delight and approval and finally burst into a tremendous applause.

"What a dance! It was as graceful and delicate like a trembling bamboo leaf!"

"Oh! What a spectacle it was! Holding a parasol, how could this little kettle perform acrobatics on the tightrope! It's extraordinary."

So, every day, more and more people began to pour in from the hamlets and the towns, from distant lands across the rivers and over the hilltops, to see the great show. It was



not long before the woodcutter and his wife became rich beyond their wildest dreams.

One day, the good ■■■ told his wee little colleague, "My dear Friend, you've done far too much for us. You look tired and overworked. We now have enough to last us till the end of our lives. So, now we would like you to lead your life the way you wish."

From that day onwards, there were no more shows. In fact, the badger was truly exhausted, but he was happy that his plan to help his rescuer had succeeded marvellously. All that he wished now was to spend the rest of his days in the quiet precincts of the temple. So, bidding an emotional farewell to his human

friends, with cute little affectionate bows, he turned once again to the form of the beautiful little tea-kettle.

The woodcutter, who naturally had grown extremely fond of the badger, carried the kettle to the temple with a heavy heart. The priest was moved and happy when he heard the whole story and was delighted to know the good fortune that had befallen the kind woodcutter's family. He was sorry and apologised for unwittingly putting the kettle over the fire. He decided to give the kettle ■ place of honour in one of the peaceful recesses of the temple.

There, perhaps to this very day, stands the wee little kettle that once was grateful to a kind heart.

—Retold by Anup Kishore Das



WORLD OF NATURE

Primitive primate

Aye-Aye is a monkey. Because of its small size, rather large eyes, and bushy tail, when it was discovered in 1780, it was at first taken to be a squirrel. This Madagascan lemur is considered a primitive monkey. With the long finger on each hand, it probes into the bark of trees for its favourite food – insects! It does not eat much of anything else and, therefore, survival is a problem.



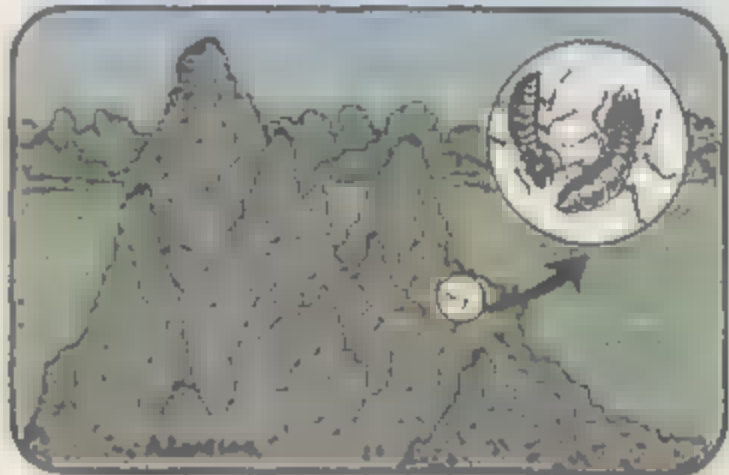
In no hurry

The only food of the Everglade Kite, of the U.S.A. is snail, which it catches only when it comes out of the shell. The beak has a powerful hook, but the bird does not use it for pulling out the snail. This is because the hollow of the shell is not straight. The bird patiently waits for the snail to come out and then pounces on it. The hook gives a jab and it paralyses the snail. The bird thus does an expert job.



Ants which are cockroaches

White ants, which eat into wood and paper, as many of us would have watched in consternation, are not ants, but they are nearer to cockroaches! They are also known as termites, and their houses – huge mounds of earth that rise above the ground – are called termitariums. The 'living rooms' are actually below the ground. During the breeding season, they grow wings and fly out of the homes to mate. They pair off and establish new homes. Termites are found all over the world.



SPORTS SNIPPETS

Fastest

The fastest man on earth **now** is **Leroy Burrell**, of the U.S.A. He clocked a world record time of 9.85 seconds when he ran the 100 metres on July 6 at Lausanne. He bettered the record held by Carl Lewis, also of the U.S.A., by one-hundredth of a second. It **was** a comeback for Burrell because, in 1991, he had created a world record with a



9.90 seconds run. The same year, Carl Lewis bettered that record at the Tokyo meet. In 1992, Burrell finished fifth at the Barcelona Olympics. And in 1993, he did not even qualify for the World Championships at Stuttgart. In the 1987 World Championships, Ben Johnson had clocked 9.83 seconds; a year later, he covered the distance in 9.79 seconds—the fastest ever recorded. However, both timings were cancelled after he failed a drug test. So, right now, Burrell's timing is the best.

Babe of the Games

The 15th Commonwealth Games, which opened in Victoria, Canada, on

August 19, did not produce many world records. But it saw the participation of South Africa after 36 years. The country was deprived of its Commonwealth membership in 1961 because of its policy of apartheid. In all, 64 countries sent their sportsmen and women to the 15th Games. One of the countries—Hong Kong—will not be there for the 16th Games, as in 1997 Britain would have **handed** the island nation back to China. The opening ceremony had 3,800 performers. The youngest of them was just six weeks old. The baby was part of the choir. And the oldest participant was 95. He was among the group from Coast Salish who welcomed the visitors from the former British Empire. As she opened the Games, Queen Elizabeth read out a message brought to the venue in her baton. The baton was earlier taken to all the 64 countries after it left Buckingham Palace on March 14. It was brought into the stadium by Myrian Bedard, Canada's gold medal winner in the Winter Olympics in Norway. She propelled herself around the track on roller blades using ski poles, before she handed the baton to the Queen.

Two records in **one** race

In the Commonwealth Games, an Australian swimmer broke two world records standing in his name. On August 24, **Perkins** swam 1,500 metres freestyle in 14m 41.66 seconds, taking 1.82 seconds off his mark made at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics (14:43:48). The same year, in Sydney, he had created a world record for 800

metres, which he beat in Victoria. The 800m is considered part of the 1,500m for purposes of record. Perkins's timing was 7:46:00, which was 0.60 seconds better than his Sydney record. In 1973, a similar "double" was achieved by Stephen Holland of Australia who broke both records in the same race twice.



Nine wickets in ■■■■ innings

Devon Malcolm of England has become the fifth cricketer to enter the record books for best bowling performances in Tests. On August 20, he took ■ South African wickets, conceding only 57 runs, in their second innings in the third and final Test at the Oval. The best figures—all 10 wickets for ■■ runs—remain to the credit of Jim Laker, also of England, against Australia at Old Trafford in 1956. Laker took 9 for 28 in the other Australian innings. The other three bowlers to beat Malcolm's figures are G.A. Lohman of En-



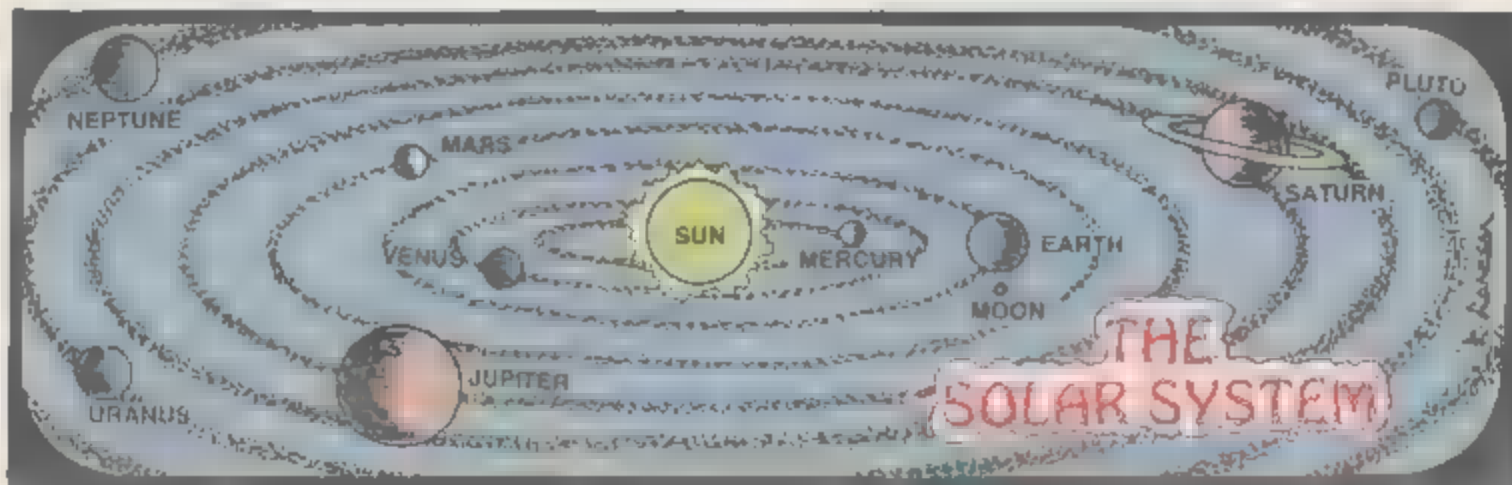
gland (9 for 28 against South Africa, in Johannesburg, 1895), Richard Hadlee of New Zealand (9 for 52 against Australia in Brisbane, 1985) and Abdul Qadir of Pakistan (9 for 56 against England in Lahore, 1987).

Leading wicket-taker

In one-day matches, Pakistan's all-rounder, **Wasim Akram**, is the leading wicket-taker. When he trapped Sri Lankan opener Sanath Jayasuriya in the one-day series at the Premadasa stadium in Colombo on August 24, the 27-year-old left arm fast bowler claimed his 252nd wicket. He thus went past Kapil Dev's world record of 251 wickets. "I don't want to stop here; I want to continue taking as many wickets as I can in both one-dayers and Test matches," commented Wasim Akram. The question asked is: Will he surpass Kapil Dev's record of 434 wickets in 131 Test matches? Akram already has 230 Test wickets in his pocket. He feels, ■ he can take 50 more wickets in the seven Test matches Pakistan is scheduled to play this season, he will then make an attempt to beat Kapil's world record. Kapil himself remarked: "Akram is a fantastic bowler. Maybe, he will be the first bowler to take 300 wickets in one-day cricket."

Retired with records

When the Australian captain **Allen Border** (38) announced his retirement in May, he said, "I am just basically fed up." He would not have been fed up of making world records! He played in international cricket for 16 years; he played in 156 Test matches; and he made 11,174 runs in Test matches, at an average of 50.56 runs. He scored 27 Test centuries, the highest score being 205 against New Zealand in 1987. He also captured 39 wickets in his Test career. And he had captained his country 93 times—more number of times than any of his compatriots.



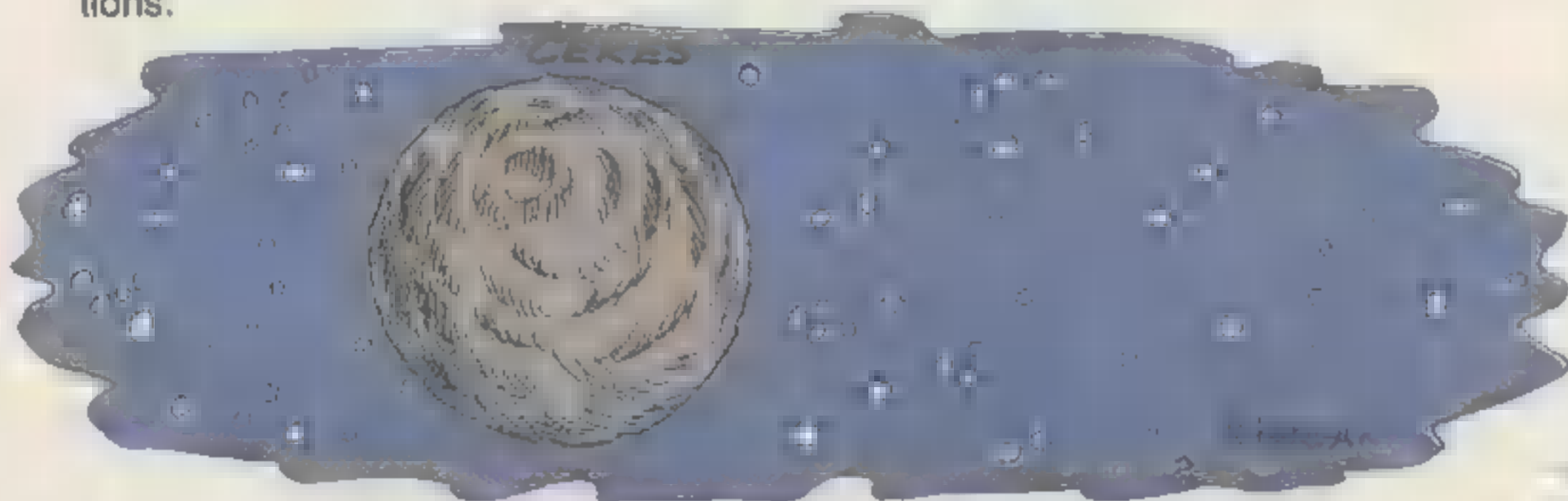
THE EARTH'S RELATIVES

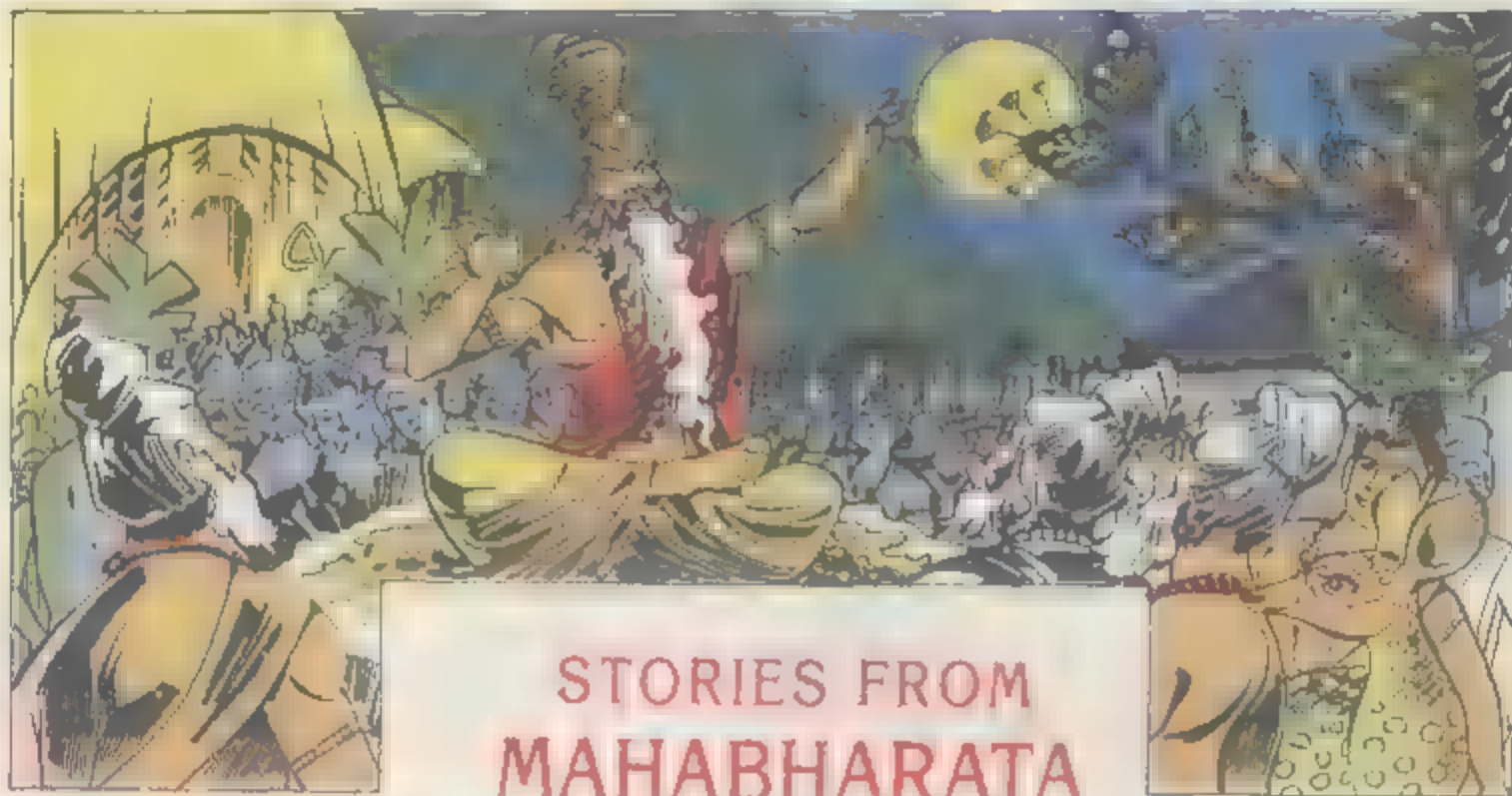
Some of our relatives live in the neighbourhood. Some live in faraway towns ■ cities. Some of them are scattered in distant lands—in the West or in Africa. Our Earth, too, has her relatives spread over a vast space. They are the eight planets (apart from herself) who move round the mighty Sun.

Who are they? They ■ Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto. Together they make our Solar System. But they ■ not the only citizens of the Solar System. There are numerous other tiny planets. They are generally called asteroids. The largest among them has ■ diameter of 800 km and it is called Ceres.

Like ■ uncle or a brother who may live faraway, but can still have a say in our affairs, these planets exercise their influence on our Earth. In fact, the ancient Indian astrology laid great importance on the influence of the planets on the lives of individual human beings.

But is our earth influenced by the members of the Solar System alone? Who knows what influence a distant star, far outside the Solar System, can have on her? In fact, everything in the universe is connected with one another. We know this much for certain, even though we may not know how close or meaningful are such connections.





STORIES FROM MAHABHARATA

(It is said that what is not there in the Mahabharata, is not there in Bharata. This great epic, written by Vyasa some three thousand years ago, is among the proudest possessions of mankind. Wonderful characters and events abound in this monumental work of Indian Literature.)

In his forest abode, Saunak was performing a big yaga. Suta was one of the many seers invited to this fire rite. He was a great story-teller, apart from being a sage.

After giving Suta a warm welcome, the sages assembled there gathered round him and requested him to tell them some of the many stories that he knew and which suited

the occasion.

"Friends," replied Suta, "I can tell you a story which is most suitable for this holy occasion. It is the *Mahabharata*, composed by the great sage, Veda Vyas."

"Do tell us," they requested him.

"Sages," began Suta, "I'll tell you first how the *Mahabharata* came to be written. Veda Vyas was meditat-



ing on a peak of the king of mountains, Himavant, when the idea of writing the *Mahabharata*, the story of the sons of Pandu and Dhritarashtra, came to his mind. As the idea was taking shape, the sage, had a dream. The God of Creation, Brahma, appeared before him. Veda Vyas touched His feet and said: 'Bless me, Omnipotent Father. I desire to write ■ memorable epic which will radiate moral and spiritual wisdom for ages to come. I cannot do this unaided. So recommend to me a scribe, who will faithfully take down my dictation.'

"Son, blessed be your noble

project,' replied the God. 'I recommend Lord Ganapati to you for writing down your inspired poetry.' Then Veda Vyas woke up from his dream. Veda Vyas closed his eyes and meditated on Lord Ganapati, the elephant-headed God, who is invoked at the beginning of every important function. And there stood the God himself! The sage bowed to Him and said, 'Lord Brahma, the Divine Father, has asked me to seek your help for writing down an epic which I will compose for the good of mankind. Please do me this great favour!'

"The lovely god agreed. Veda Vyas saw before his mind's eyes the whole story of the *Mahabharata* unfold itself. He described what he saw, and lord Ganapati took it all down."

Sage Suta then commenced his recital of the *Mahabharata* to Saunak and the other sages gathered there.

The Story of the Stolen Earrings

As Janamejay, the son of King Parikshit, was performing ■ great yaga, a hound of the Gods, called Saramaya, strayed on to the sacred sprt and was driven away with sticks

by the princes who were keeping guard over the site. It went and complained to its mother, Sarama, about its humiliation, and she cursed the princes, saying, "Whoever hurts the innocent and the poor, will soon be made to pay for it."

When Janamejay came to know of this, he wanted to forestall the curse by offering prayers to the Gods. He chose Somasrav, a priest who was worthy of the task.

While the prayers were being offered by Somasrav, the sage Utanka came to King Janamejay's palace and said, "O King, you forget your duty!"

"Revered sir," replied the king, "I do not know to which lapse of mine you may be referring. Haven't I been most careful in doing all my kingly duties all these years?"

"Your greatest lapse," replied Utanka, "has been to leave Takshak, the serpent, who killed your noble father, unpunished. Not only did he bite your father, but he also influenced Kasyap, the physician, not to cure him."

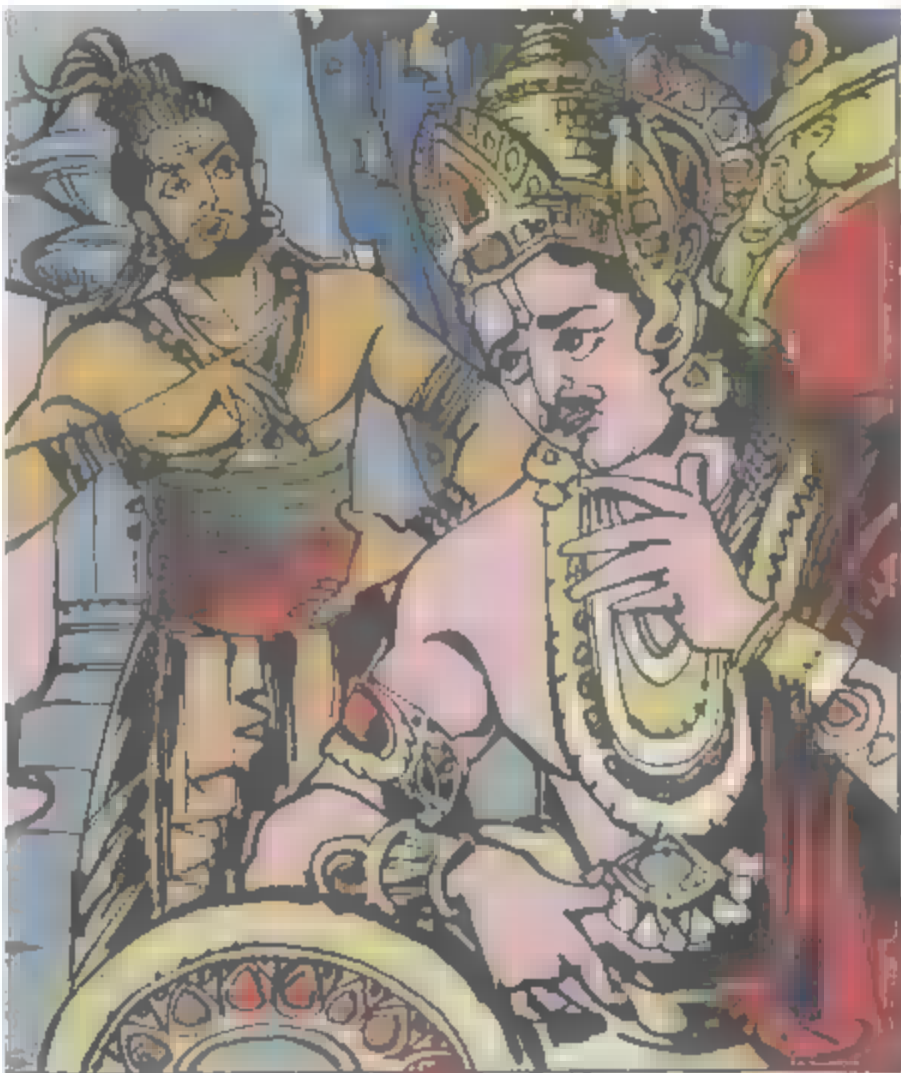
Utanka himself had his own score to settle with Takshak. After his studies were over, he had wished to offer a gift to his teacher, who in turn bade him to ask his wife what she



would like to have. She asked Utanka for two ear-rings which were worn by Paushya's queen.

Utanka went to the queen and asked her for the ear-rings. She readily gave them to him. But before doing so, she warned Utanka, "Revered sir, the serpent Takshak is also after these ear-rings! He is cunning and swift. So, take good care of the ear-rings."

The queen's fears came true. As Utanka was standing in a lake praying to the Sun God, Takshak stole the ear-rings which Utanka had kept for safety ■ the bank of the lake. Seeing Takshak run away with the



ear-rings, Utanka chased him. After a long chase, he caught Takshak. Suddenly Takshak turned himself into a snake, slithered through his fingers, and disappeared into a hole in the ground.

Utanka dug into the hole. He dug deeper and deeper till he came to the Land of the Serpents. His prayers to the serpents were unheeded by them. As he was becoming desperate, he saw a person on horseback. The horse was the God of Fire, the rider was Lord Indra. But Utanka did not know this. When the person asked Utanka what he could do for him, he replied, "Sir, pray, give me supremacy over

the Serpent Land."

All of a sudden, tongues of flame leaped through the nostrils of the horse. They billowed out and spread, with columns of black smoke swirling into the sky. Afraid that the whole of the Serpent Land would be burnt to ashes, Takshak gave back the stolen ear-rings. Utanka returned home and gave the ear-rings to his teacher's wife.

After Utanka left, Janamejay asked his ministers whether they could tell him about the death of his father or not. The ministers told the king the story of Parikshit's death:

Parikshit's death

Parikshit came to the throne after the death in battle, of Abhimanyu, his father, while the Pandavas, his forefathers, left for the heavens.

King Parikshit was very fond of hunting. Once while chasing a deer in the forest, he came across a sage, lost in meditation, and asked him, "Sir, can you tell me in which direction the deer has gone?"

The sage made no answer, and Parikshit, in a fit of anger, picked up a dead snake with his arrow-head and slung it round the neck of the sage. The sage's wife came to know of this. He cursed the sage who had put the dead snake round his father's neck,





saying that the doer of the deed shall die within a week—bitten by a serpent!

When, after his meditation, the sage came to know of his son's curse, he was unhappy. He sent a messenger to King Parikshit, warning him of the danger he was in, so that he could take all possible precautions.

Parikshit repented for his rashness and, upon hearing of the curse, was extremely sad. His ministers built a fortress of black granite for him and made it snake-proof. They stocked the fortress with anti-snake-bite herbs and medicines. Eminent physicians were invited from distant

places. The king lived in the fortress with his ministers and felt safe.

Six days passed without anything amiss. On the seventh day, Kasyap, the greatest snake-bite specialist, was going to Parikshit's fortress in order to cure him if he were to be bitten by any snake. Takshak, also in human form, was walking along behind Kasyap, racking his brain for a plan with which he could bypass the guards in order to reach the king. Both of them met. When Kasyap told Takshak of his errand, the latter asked, feigning innocence, "What can you do, sir, for people bitten by snakes?"

"I have antidotes for the bites of the most venomous of snakes," replied Kasyap, "and I can bring back to life even those dead of snake-bite."

"Impossible!" exclaimed Takshak.

"I can show you, if you like!" replied Kasyap.

"That may be true of other snakes, sir, but not of Takshak's bite," boasted Takshak and added, "I'm Takshak, my friend! My bite is a little different from that of the other snakes in the world. Those whom I bite don't just die. They perish and are reduced to a handful of dust. Your treatment will be of no avail to them! So, it is



best that you returned home, sir."

"Not so easily," replied Kasyap. "Even from the dust I can bring the dead back to life!"

Takshak challenged Kasyap to ■ test and bit ■ big banyan tree. In a jiffy ■ big heap of white ashes lay, where the tree had stood.

Kasyap closed his eyes and made an incantation. Out of the ashes, the banyan tree ■ again sprang up, as before, with its green leaves and its many-pillared splendour.

"Agreed, sir," replied Takshak, "you're great! But should you foil a sage's curse? If you desist from your endeavour, I'll give you more gold than Parikshit can ever give you!"

Kasyap took the gold Takshak gave him and returned home.

Takshak continued ■ his journey.

He sent some of his snakes in the form of men to Parikshit's fortress. They took flowers and fruits to the king. When the king opened one of those fruits, there was a little worm in it. Parikshit said, "The seventh day's sun is setting. If the curse is to come true, it'll have to be through this worm, or not at all!"

A big hiss, and behold! the little worm became ■ huge serpent, projecting tongues of flame. It was Takshak. He bit the king. Nothing remained after this. Not only the king, but the whole building of granite, the ministers, and everything else had become a heap of ashes.

—To continue

Fair ■ needs no paint.

As a man lives so shall he die.

Which half is better?

Chittaranjan Sarangi, of Marshaghai, was going to the cinema. He met friend Subhas on the way. They were meeting after a long time. As there ■■■ some time for the show to start, Chittaranjan engaged his friend in conversation, recalling their college days. "Subhas, why don't you go with me to see the movie? We can be together for some more time." His friend excused himself. "Sorry, buddy, I'll have to ask my better half. Maybe some other day." Subhas then walked off, fearing that he might delay his friend from reaching the theatre. Chittaranjan ■■■ on time; he bought his ticket and went inside, and was soon lost in the movie. Came interval, and then he began to worry: What did Subhas mean by 'better half'? Well, he did not know that his friend was now ■ married man, and he would better consult his wife whether he could go with his friend and whether she, too, would like to join them. Originally, the term better half meant one's spouse - husband or wife - or even an intimate friend. But nowadays, the expression refers to only one's wife and it is used half - jokingly.

C. Vijayalakshmi, of Madras, wants to know whether "I shall come to your house" is the correct way of responding to an invitation. Suppose, your friend asks you: "Will you come with me to my place?" the best way to answer is: "Yes, I shall go with you." And if your friend were to ask you: "Will you come to my place tomorrow?" the answer will be "Yes, I shall come there (tomorrow)." You can even say, "I shall go across to your place" in reply to: "Please come over to my place."





New tales of King Vikram and the Vampire

Magic cannot change mind

Dark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time; gusts of wind shook the trees. Between thunderclaps and the moaning of jackals could be heard the eerie laughter of spirits. Flashes of lightning revealed fearsome faces.

But King Vikramaditya did not swerve a bit. He climbed the ancient tree once again and brought down the corpse. However, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground, with the corpse lying on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse spoke: "O King! You seem to be making untiring efforts and without respite as if you wish to achieve something. I pity you. Instead of enjoying comfortable sleep on a cozy bed, you're still coming after me. Are you trying to please someone? Probably a lady? Nothing wrong in that, yet you must be prepared for disappointment. That's what happened to Sundaravarma. Let me tell you his



story." The vampire then began his narration.

Prince Sundaravarma was the son of Singaravarma of Sripuri. The prince was quite handsome and the name fitted him very well. Besides, he was intelligent and clever, too. The rulers of the neighbouring kingdoms considered him a suitor to their daughters and vied with each other in sending proposals of alliance to King Singaravarma. The prince looked at the portraits that reached his father, but he did not like any of them.

Prince Sundaravarma was very much interested in art and would

often visit the studios of the royal painter, Dhananjaya, and appreciate and admire his works. One day when the prince went there, Dhananjaya was busy making the portrait of a very beautiful woman. Sundaravarma could not take his eyes off the painting. 'Oh! What a beauty she is! Would there really be a woman like her?' the prince wondered.

When Dhananjaya turned round after giving some final touches to the portrait, Sundaravarma asked of him: "Who's she? Have you drawn her from imagination, or is there someone really like her?"

"She is very much living in this kingdom," replied the artist, smiling. "Her name is Poornima. She's the daughter of a poor farmer, and is yet to get married."

The prince was glad to hear that part of the detail. "I've decided to marry her," he told Dhananjaya.

That night, the prince could not get a wink of sleep. Whichever position he turned in his bed, her picture came to his mind. He could get some sleep only towards dawn, when he dreamt that a magician was taking Poornima a tiger. He young and wore a necklace which had a large red stone as a pendant.

The tiger ran fast and stopped in front of ■ banyan tree. The magician got down and led Poornima into ■ cave. The prince followed them.

Sundaravarma suddenly woke up. He remembered the general belief that whatever dream one has during the pre-dawn hours will come true. He wondered whether some magician had really abducted Poornima. Just ■ he had feared, before long the prince also heard the news that Poornima had been kidnapped by a magician called Mayanath. Sundaravarma was now certain that his dream had come true.

Mayanath was notorious for his magic and witchcraft. It was also

said of him that he was very cruel. The necklace he ■ had the power of enticing anybody to him. He had thus managed to attract the girl and take her away. People believed that nobody could do anything about it; the girl was considered as much as lost for ever.

Sundaravarma listened to all this and thought for ■ while. Then, he left the palace without telling anyone where he was going. He rode fast to the place where he had, in his dream, seen the magician with the girl. By afternoon, he reached the banyan tree beneath which the tiger had stopped. He saw a cave nearby and the tiger guarding the





entrance to the cave. It had Mayanath's necklace around its neck, with the red pendant shining bright.

The prince took the tiger un-awares and, drawing his sword, killed the animal in a flash. He then wore the necklace himself and entered the cave. He saw both Mayanath and Poornima seated on a tiger skin. Sundaravarma listened to their conversation.

"I've brought you here by my magical powers," Mayanath was saying. "However, I don't intend using the same powers to make you mine. That's why I left my magic

necklace on the tiger outside. Without the necklace, my magic won't work, and I remain a normal human being. If you agree, I shall marry you, with a lamp as our witness. And if you've any objection, I shall take you back to your place. I brought you here only to ascertain your wishes."

The prince was left wondering at the attitude and behaviour of Mayanath. He was now curious what reply Poornima would give him. He moved closer to the girl so that he could catch her words.

"If you promise to give up all your magic and witchcraft and be an example to others, I shall agree to marrying you," said Poornima.

Mayanath was overjoyed when he heard those words from Poornima. He was about to take her hands into his when Sundaravarma stepped forward and said, "This is a sorcerer, Poornima. He has brought you here with the help of his magic necklace. Don't agree to his wish. He's a cruel person. I'm the prince of the land, and I like you very much. If you marry me, you can lead a happy life."

Poornima now noticed the necklace on the prince, and the next moment she was attracted to him.

She went and stood near him. Mayanath laughed aloud. The prince looked at him angrily. "Why are you excited? According to the law of the land, you deserve punishment - death by the sword. But I'm giving you pardon just for this time. Run away and save yourself!"

Even then Mayanath did not stop laughing. "Wonderful, O prince!" said the magician, derisively. "So, you say that I brought her here with the help of the magic necklace? Then, how come you are wearing it now?"

For once, Sundaravarma groped for an answer. The next moment he took off the necklace and hurled it on the floor, where it broke into pieces. The red pendant lay in smithereens.

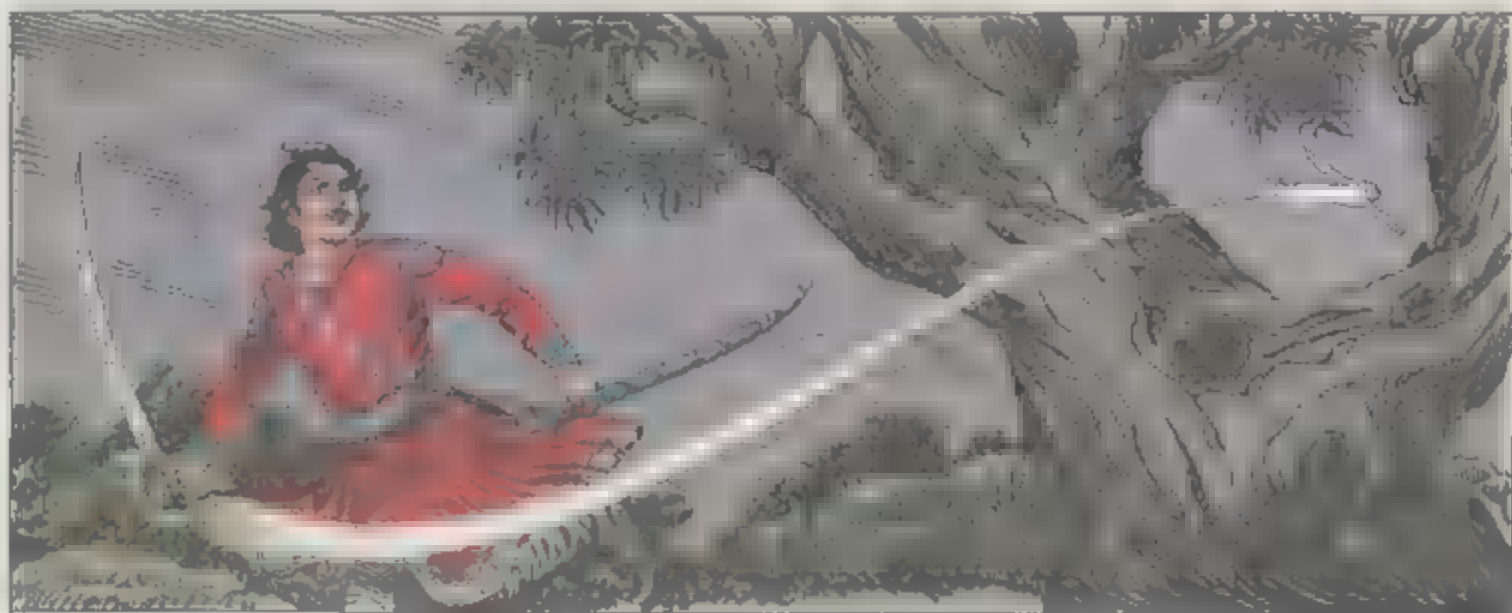
Suddenly Poornima looked up at the prince as if she had just come out of a trance. "Who are you? How did I come to you?" she asked in bewilderment. She then moved close to Mayanath. The prince rushed out of the cave, mounted his horse, and returned to the palace.

The vampire concluded the story there and turned to King Vikramaditya. "O King! Wasn't Sundaravarma enchanted by Poornima's beauty? Didn't he follow



her and the magician to the cave? He wished to make her his own, that's why he killed the tiger and wore the magic necklace. He had no more hurdles to cross, and he could have easily married Poornima. Instead, he threw away the necklace, which would have given him untold powers. What prompted him to do so? Remember, if you know the answer, and yet decide to keep silent, your head will be blown to pieces!"

The king had a ready answer for the problem posed by the vampire. "Everybody described Mayanath as cruel. However, to Poornima he was



not only not cruel but courteous and behaved with a lot of affection. He knew that a woman cannot be attracted by magic alone and that she can be brought round only at her will and with full consent. Hence he made it clear to Poornima that he would not use his magical powers on her but would ascertain her wish and await her consent to marry her. He, therefore, left the necklace on the tiger, so that he wouldn't be tempted to use its magical powers at any cost. The prince took hold of the necklace with which he attracted the girl to his side. That's why Mayanath laughed uncontrollably. He knew that more than by magic, only by argument can one change a woman's mind. By and by, the

prince also realised the meaning of the laughter. He decided that the necklace should not become the tool of anyone - ■■■■ or magician. That's why he threw it on the ground and broke it. When Sundaravarma realised that Poornima was agreeable to marrying Mayanath, he was disappointed. But there was no use compelling her to marry himself. Hence his decision to leave Mayanath and Poornima to their fate and return to the palace."

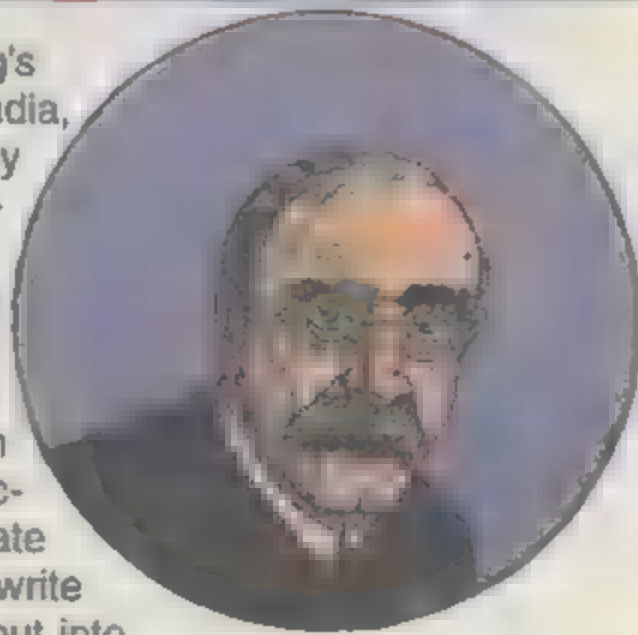
The vampire knew that the king had outwitted him once again. He flew back to the ancient tree, taking the corpse along with him. Vikram drew his sword and went after the vampire.

**Better bend the neck than bruise the forehead.
Fools build houses, and wise men live in them.**

Kipling in India

It was in January 1888 that Rudyard Kipling's *Plain Tales from the Hills* published in India, where the book was a great success. Strangely the thousand copies sent to booksellers in England remained unsold for several years!

At that time, Kipling was on the staff of a well-known newspaper, *Pioneer*, which is being published even now. Earlier, he had joined the *Civil and Military Gazette* of Lahore (now in Pakistan), as Assistant Editor. Following an accident to its Editor, Kipling was asked to officiate in his place. This gave him an opportunity to write regularly in the newspaper. His articles put into a collection after he joined the *Pioneer*. Calling it *Plain Tales*, he gave it to a publisher in Calcutta.



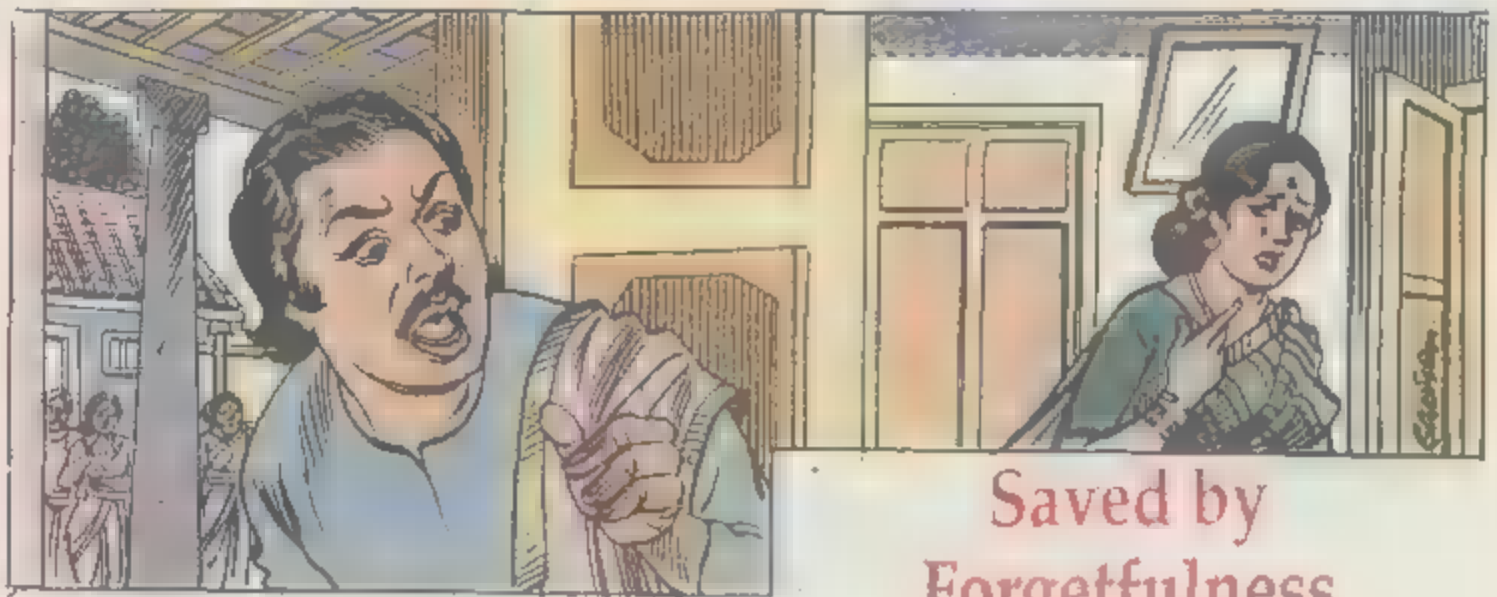
Rudyard Kipling was born in Bombay in 1865. The story is that while the invitees were attending the reception in honour of the bridegroom John Lockwood Kipling and his bride Alice Macdonald, the newlyweds were already on board a ship taking them to India. The journey took nearly nine months and soon after their arrival in Bombay, a baby boy was born to the Kiplings.

When Rudyard was five, he and his three-year-old sister Trix were sent to England, where they were looked after by a retired naval officer and his wife. In 1877, Rudyard suffered from failing eyesight and was given spectacles. When she heard of this, Mrs. Kipling hurried to England and took him back to India.

The boy soon recovered and his parents now sent him to a new Public School in England, where their friend, Cornell Price, had taken over as headmaster. At the United Services College, Devon, Rudyard spent a lot of time browsing through the books in Mr. Price's private library where he had been given free access. He was also greatly influenced by William Crofts, who taught him English literature.

Those days Rudyard used to indulge in writing poems, which were of a high order. In 1881, John Kipling had some of the poems printed privately. Many years later, the famous poet, T.S. Eliot, while making a selection of Kipling's poems for a collection, included one or two poems written in 1881-82, as he was greatly impressed by them.

Some of the later works of Rudyard Kipling are the novels *Kim* and *The Light That Failed*. *Just-so Stories* (1902) were specially written for children. In 1907, he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. In 1926, he was given the Gold Medal of the Royal Society of Literature—an honour till then given only to Walter Scott, George Meredith, and Thomas Hardy. Kipling died in 1936.



Saved by Forgetfulness

Gopal of Govindpur was short-tempered. He did not spare anybody in the family of his anger. His wife Gomati, on the other hand, was very absent-minded. No wonder, then, that the family did not pass a day without some quarrel or other. They did not enjoy any peace. Their quarrel became the object of gossip among their neighbours, who had only scorn for them. Whenever she got a chance, Gomati thought of her plight and wondered how she could solve the problem.

One day, when Gopal came back from the farm, he shouted at Gomati. "Before I went away in the morning, I had asked you to keep my clothes ironed. Have you done that?"

Gomati remembered that only then. "I'm sorry, I completely forgot about it," she tried to apologise.

Gopal was really angry. "You're

not carrying out whatever I ask you to, and then you start apologising! It's my fate to go out to my friends wearing soiled clothes!" he cursed himself.

"I had cleanly forgotten about it, true," confessed Gomati. "What if? I shall have the clothes ironed right now."

Gopal's anger would not subside. "I did the most foolish thing in marrying you!" he said and began beating his own head.

Their neighbours peeped out from their doors and windows. They had a hearty laugh over the couple's quarrel. Gomati saw this and she tried to pacify him, but that only irritated him and he became angrier. "No, let me wear the same clothes and become the butt end of my friends' ridicule. Shame!" Gopal stomped inside.

Sometime later, Gomati's neigh-

bours, Kamala and Sarala, called on her. "We were listening to your quarrel," they whispered to her. "We never knew your husband is so short-tempered. He picks a quarrel very easily. Nothing appears to satisfy him, or please him. And he always shouts at you. Why should you suffer such indignities? If any-one of us had been in your place, we would have gone to the nearest pond or river and jumped in." They pacified her for some time.

After they had gone away, Gomati recalled what they had told her. They were right. How long would she brook Gopal's angry outbursts? What kind of life was she leading? It would be better if she were dead. She became very practical. She wrote a note saying that she was fed up with her life, threw the note on their bed, and left the house early next morning.

Gopal was away attending a wedding. When he returned in the evening, he saw the letter left by his wife. He read it a few times. He thought her intention was to commit suicide. So he went about looking for her in wells, ponds, and the nearby river. No, there was no trace of Gomati. He decided that he should not delay informing Gomati's



father.

The old man was sitting in the verandah of his house. Gopal handed Gomati's letter to him. He read it once. "If what she says is true, Gomati must have by now taken her life. But she is inside. You may go and meet her."

Gomati, who was listening to their conversation, now came to the door herself. She saw the piece of paper in her father's hand. "What's it, father?" she asked him and grabbed it from his hand. She began reading it. She had not gone beyond the first sentence when she muttered, "What a shame! I



completely forgot that I had written a letter like this and left it on our bed. The moment I came out, I came straight here forgetting why I came out of home. Let me go and commit suicide!" She then ran towards the well in the compound.

Gopal quickly went and stood in her way. "Please forgive me, Gomati," he pleaded. "It's a pity that I'm short-tempered even from my childhood days. I am not able to change my character. I had thought about it several times. But I never expected that my anger would drive you to contemplate suicide. Fortunately, your forgetfulness has saved you. I shall never again get angry

with you on any count. I'll never quarrel with you."

"I know my weakness, my lord!" said Gomati. "I realise that it's my absent-mindedness that provoked you to feel irritated and be angry with me. I'm afraid it may be a malady in me. I must consult a good doctor."

"You both have now understood each other." That was Gomati's mother who had come into the room then. "A husband and wife should have perfect understanding. Henceforth, you won't face any problem. All clouds have vanished." When she looked at them, she saw them dropping their face in shame.

One kindness is the price of another.
A good garden may have some weeds.
Joy and sorrow are next door neighbours.



LET US KNOW

What is the difference between war and battle?

-Kshyamanidhi Senapati, Padampur

In the Kurukshetra war, there were so many battles between the leaders of the two rival groups, the Pandavas and Kauravas. Similarly, the Great Wars of 1914-18 and 1939-45 comprised several battles in different sectors, and on land, sea, and air. So, war is the term given to a long drawn out struggle, whereas battles are single events that guide the overall results of the war.

What is the difference between habit and practice?

-Regret Iyer, Bangalore

Smoking is a habit; drinking alcohol is another habit; moving your hands and shaking your head while you sing is a habit, which is just a tendency to perform certain actions. A doctor's practice is in medicine; an advocate practises law. Lighting a lamp to start a ceremony is a practice, or a custom. All this does not denote one's behaviour.

What is fax?

-Akash Deb Chakraborty, Dombivli

Fax is the abbreviation of 'facsimile'. The fax machine electronically scans a paper or document inserted into it and transfers what is written on the document to a receiving machine at the other end by a telephone line. The copy thus produced is called a 'fax'. The machine that despatches and the one that receives the information are connected to telephones. After establishing contact over the phone, and when the party at the receiving end is ready, the document is fed and is received at the other end within minutes.



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PICKS FROM THE WISE

Nothing is harder on your laurels than resting on them. - Franklin Jones

Our goal must be, not peace in our time but peace for all time. - Truman

The fewer the words, the better the prayer. - Martin Luther King



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